

Cambridgeshire Aviation Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at
bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in
touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library
where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the
1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

Cambridgeshire Aviation Scrapbook – I make no claims that this is in any way a complete record of flying in Cambridgeshire. Please appreciate what is listed and help complete the numerous gaps

1887

E.P. Frost ornithopter recalled – 61 05 05b

Frost ornithopter photo 1887 – 61 05 12c

1897 09 06

Parachute descent Haverhill, p3

1901 02 12

As we tread the borders of the 20th century we wonder whether the people of the year 2001 will find the railway train be a thing of the past because they are using flying machines as a means of locomotion. Will the fact of sending a message along a wire be deemed romantic at that period or will the telegraph appear to them as old fashioned and romantic as the first efforts of telegraphy by means of wooden arms do to us. The romance of looking forward is to us not to be compared with that of looking back.

1901 12 18

Mr Frank Cooper, an undergraduate of Clare College, made an ascent in a balloon from the grounds of the Welsh Harp, Hendon and dropped in a parachute from an altitude of 1,500 ft into the grounds of a private mansion about a mile and a half away. The parachute did not open immediately and the daring aeronaut had a dead fall of at least 300 ft after which the canvas inflated and then descended gradually. Mr Cooper is engaged in the study of aerostatics and intends to apply himself to the problem of aerial navigation, which he believes is possible by mechanical means CDN 1901 12 18

1902 01 28

Dr F.W. Hutchinson of Cambridge made an ascent with Mr Gaudron, the aeronaut, from the grounds of the Crystal Palace in a balloon of 38,000 cubic feet capacity, to make observations with respect to the presence of bacilli in the upper reaches of the atmosphere. He took with him eight samples of sterilised gelatine and exposed them at different altitudes in order to capture stray microbes suspended in the air over London. These he intends to bring to Cambridge and cultivate, afterwards determining the nature of the bacilli he had collected. CDN 1902 01 28

1902 08 12

All day the great mass of silk which was presently to make a journey to the skies was a source of deep interest. Around Parker's Piece where the balloon was taking its huge meal of 32,000 feet of coal-gas were rings of spectators. Slowly the gas inflated the silk, the aeronauts loosened the ropes and the balloon rose from the grass a graceful pear-like shape. After settling the final details Spencer gave the word for the two passengers to jump aboard, then with a startling rapidity the balloon leaped up and was soon several hundred feet above the earth. It first travelled in the direction of Hills Road but then, caught by a current of wind, sailed over to the Newmarket side. CDN 1902 08 12

1902 08 14

Enquiries were being made as to what had become of the balloon and her cargo which left Parker's Piece, where it had landed, and whether the two Cambridge voyageurs had returned safely. No one knew. One wag said that the quartet had been blown across the English Channel and landed at Dieppe. And there were those gullible enough to believe it. As a matter of fact the balloon did an hour's trip and covered 28 miles, landing in the grounds of Spencer's Grange at Great Yeldham in Essex c 02 08 14

1903 03 03 c

The well-known aeronaut, Rev J.M. Bacon, an old scholar of Trinity College said the afternoon of his first balloon ascent was a very boisterous one and it was only the consummate skill of Captain Dale

that brought them safely to earth again. Not long afterwards Captain Dale was dashed to pieces and lost his brave life. He made one ascent to witness a wonderful shower of meteors when, instead of being up for two hours, he was drifting helpless for 10. His experiments in the use of a balloon in time of war and his races, carrying despatches against 70 cyclists, are well known and the graphic views which illustrated them made the lecture at Cambridge Guildhall additionally attractive. c03 03 07

1904 07 25

Residents in Cambridge were among the witnesses of a race between two balloons which started from the Crystal Palace. The first, named the Norfolk, contained Mr C.F. Pollock, D. Lloyd and J.T.C. Moore Brabazon and the second, the Aero Club No.1 contained the Hon C.S. Rolls, a former Cambridge man, Prof Huntingdon and Mr Frank Butler. Mr Pollock obtained a lead of several miles by trailing – keeping very low and trailing a rope along the ground – but this could not be done for long as a village had to be ‘jumped’. When approaching Bottisham it was very near the ground and a number of cyclists awaited the descent; their hopes were doomed when the occupants threw out a quantity of ballast and ascended to a good height. A safe landing was effected near Ely for one balloon and the second was captured by a motor that was sent to chase it. CDN 25.7.1904

1904 08 04

Sir – last Monday night I was cycling from Eltisley to Cambridge and some time before I reached Caxton I saw on the right a large bright circular red light which disappeared soon afterwards. Shortly afterwards I saw it again, but this time it was an orange colour. It soon disappeared, just as a lighthouse light would. Next time it appeared it was green. It kept on appearing until I was close to Madingley. Later the moon rose in a directly opposite direction and I saw no more of the light. Can any of your readers explain? ‘Curious’ CDN 4.8.1904

1905 07 08

Mr Hutchinson of Brooklands Avenue attached a pair of natural wings to a swinging balance and actuated them by means of an electric motor in the way in which a bird’s wings move. Encouraged by the experiments he constructed a larger machine with wings of 60 feet square, the power being supplied by a petrol cycle engine. The results are encouraging but no actual attempt at unrestrained flight has been attempted due to the probability of an unpremeditated decent. Were it to be exhibited at the Mammoth Show what a ‘draw’ it would be. 05 07 08b

1906 01 24

Haverhill Gala Committee told the court they arranged to have a balloon ascent with a double parachute descent. Mr Bidmead of Plaistow, an aeronaut and balloon manufacturer, agreed to perform for £21 and sub-contracted Mr Mizen and his wife to make the jump. The committee provided the gas, labour and sand; Bidmead brought the balloon but it was porous and when the gas was turned on it did not fill. The balloon did not go up and they sued for their costs which including posters came to £10 12s. 06 01 24a & b & c

1906 10 02

Balloon race, p3

1907 09 07

Arthur Deck, senior, is Cambridge’s oldest balloonist. In 1877, when he made an ascent from York, he initiated the custom of throwing cards from a balloon with a request that they should be posted by the finder. At that time considerable nerve was needed to brave the almost unknown dangers of high altitude. His adventures have not been confined to this side of the channel: many years ago he made an ascent from Paris 07 09 07b

1908 02 15

Some excitement was caused in Fulbourn by the descent of a large balloon with two aeronauts on board. Coming from the direction of Shelford it passed over the golf course and dropped into a field. The aerial travellers – one an old Trinity Hall man – said they left London at noon with Cambridge as

their objective. The balloon was deflated and packed on a cart ready for the return journey per Great Eastern Railway. 08 02 15d

1908 09 04

Arthur Deck was one of the best-known inhabitants of Cambridge. Hundreds annually gathered on King's Parade to witness his quaint tradition of firing rockets at midnight every New Year's Eve. As a young man he made balloon ascents including one from Fenner's when the balloon tore a slice off the pavilion roof. Even when a white-haired old man he could be seen on sunny mornings taking his dip upon Sheep's Green, distaining shallow water and swimming slowly between the ladders. CWN 08 09 04 p5

1908 10 09

A sensation was created at Sutton by the descent of a monster balloon near the Chain Causeway. It was the renowned 'Valkyrie' carrying the champion lady balloonist, the Hon Mrs Assheton Harbord which had been inflated at Battersea Park Gas Work hoping to sail as far as Peterborough. It landed without the slightest difficulty and was packed in a cart for conveyance to Sutton station. Mrs Harbord's motor car had followed the balloon for some distance but the chauffeur had lost sight of it so, after being entertained by Walter Haddock of the Brooklands, she took the train from Ely. CWN 08 10 09 p8

1908 11 13

Perhaps it will be some comfort to the party of revellers near Selwyn College the other night to know that the balloon they saw was a real one and the occupants living men and not huge white rats. It was the 'Daily Graphic' balloon on its unsuccessful attempt to reach Siberia and contained an old Trinity man, Capt E.M. Maitland. He says he distinctly recognised the Roman Catholic Church and burnt some red flares as they passed over the town. CWN 08 11 13 p5

1909 02 19

Airships were the real menace, Burwell Rifle Club was told. Foreign nations had an immense number of them capable of living up in the air for 48 hours away from their base. They could carry half a ton of dynamite. They could not dodge over floating ironclads and attack them but they could drop dynamite into our naval dockyards and a navy without a base was not a navy at all. The authorities in the United States were very worried about them 09 02 19

1909 05 22

The unknown airship whose nocturnal wanderings in East Anglia have caused such a sensation is said to have been seen in Downham Fen eight days ago. Mr James Wilkin thought he heard the noise of a motor car but could not see one. His son said "Didn't you see it! It was an airship!" Other people in the locality observed the mysterious stranger, which is said to have gone in the direction of Littleport 09 05 22

1909 06 04

Mr William Lack states that when he was in Taylor's Lane, Swavesey, at 2.30 am, he saw a large object in the sky which had every appearance of being an airship. The object had a strong light at its head and another at its tail. It appeared to be passing towards Huntingdon along the line of the old road from Cambridge. A police constable however, who was patrolling at the same time, saw nothing of the apparition 09 06 04

1909 06 05

Concern that airships might land on Parkers Piece, fear that flag found on Midsummer Common was dropped from German airship 09 06 05

1909 06 11

It is a surprise that Cambridge has long been immune from the raids of the 'scareship'. There are splendid places such as the roof of King's College chapel where a Zeppelin might find a lovely

anchorage. Now a flag flaunting an eagle rampant has been picked up in the dead of night. This gaudy tinselled thing lies stowed away in the police station bearing the inscription 'This flag, believed to have been dropped from an airship, was found on Midsummer Common'. Nervous readers should be assured that it is a flimsy trifle, two inches square, and it is thought improbable that the owners will return in search of their missing property 09 06 11

1909 06 25

Something strange was seen in the air over Knapwell. The policeman hurried to the scene on his bicycle where a crowd had collected, confident they had caught an airship. It proved to be a balloon which contained one passenger. The aeronaut's name was not known but 'C.S. Rolls' was marked on the canvas and it is thought it came from London. The balloon was packed up and conveyed by horse and cart to Old North Road Station. 09 06 25

1909 07 10

Rumours of airship being built near Cambridge 09 07 10

1909 08 20

About noon on Friday a mysterious object was observed in the sky hovering over Church End, Swavesey. People stopped and stared and wondered. Housewives rushed from their kitchen recklessly leaving pots and pans to boil over and their dinners at the mercy of the predatory cat, and men in the fields dropped their tools and gazed. The much talked-of airship had come at last. No it was too small: it must be an aeroplane with M. Bleriot aboard. At length a keen-eyed gazer detected a line connecting the flying object to the earth. It was a kite resembling an aeroplane sent up by some London visitors who were sitting quietly in Mr Twist's stack yard oblivious of the excitement they had caused. CWN 09 08 20

1909 09 17

All Cambridge will soon be taking a deep personal interest in aviation. In a large barn at Oakington is the slim wooden skeleton of one of the first all-British monoplanes. The plane, which will soon be completed and ready for trial spins, is the joint work of Messrs A.M. Grose and N.A. Feary, two expert London engineers. It will be fitted with a 20 horse-power engine and has already been entered for the 'Daily Mail' £1,000 prize for the first circular flight by an all-British aeroplane. They selected Oakington for the express purpose of dodging inquisitive Press but gave a courteous interview to the News representative CWN 09 09 17 & CWN 09 09 24 Oakington aeroplane – 59 10 30a & b, f & g

1909 09 25

Notes on Mr Frost's flying machine at West Wrating, now beyond recovery 09 09 25

1909 10 08

Oakington aircraft news – 09 10 08

1909 10 22

Shoppers had the unusual opportunity of seeing an aeroplane in the streets of Cambridge. It was an all-British monoplane invented and designed by Jack Humphreys, founder of the British Aeroplane Syndicate and one-time Cambridge resident. He had worked day and night at Wivenhoe to get the machine ready for the Blackpool meeting and had hoped to put it on the train there. Instead he had it towed to Cambridge but missed the turning at Station Road and had to drive through the narrow central streets until he could get back. A crowd of railway officials, crossing-sweepers and daintily-dressed ladies quickly clustered around it. CWN 09 10 22

1909 11 26

Mr Dennis, a man of the utmost credence in Isleham, states quite seriously that on Tuesday night he saw a floating light in the sky. Struck by the unusual spectacle he watched it proceed in a straight light across the railroad and on to Fordham. Mr Dille, the Newmarket and Isleham carrier was on the road near Fordham at the same time but saw nothing CWN 09 11 26

1910 02 25

Mr F.C. Pruden has been experimenting with a new cycloplane which he has invented and which he kept in a shed at Needham Hall, Elm. The machine embodied some very novel ideas and great care was observed in keeping the thing secret. It was all but completed and a trial trip had been arranged but about midnight flames were seen bursting from the shed where the machine was stored along with a motor car. Both were completely destroyed. It is believed the fire was the work of an incendiary as villagers saw a man riding quickly on an unlighted bicycle. CWN 10 02 25

1910 02 25

A fine aviation ground is to be established Huntingdon on the site of the old racecourse due to the enterprise of a syndicate to be known as 'Aviation Courses Limited' who hope to have flying in progress during the Whitsuntide holidays. It will be started under the aegis of the Royal Aero Club supported by Lord Sandwich and a Huntingdon and Midland Counties Aviation Club will be formed. A grandstand is being erected, the Humber Company are erecting workshops and they anticipate the co-operation of the Bleriot School of Aviation. There will be periodical race-meetings and international gatherings of aviators 10 02 25o

1910 04 01

Huntingdon proposed aviation course proceeding and the first machine, a Bleriot monoplane has already arrived. The owner, James Radley has been granted permission to use the ground for trial flights OF 10 04 01

1910 04 08

The first real flying machine ever delivered in Cambridge arrived at the Hobson Street garage of Cambridge Automobile and Engineering Company. It is an exact counterpart of the monoplane with which M. Bleriot flew across the channel. On Friday the engine, tractor and ignition were tested. It worked splendidly and developed great power, the screw creating a tremendous draught and exerting such a force that, although the machine had not its wings and tail fitted, it took half-a-dozen men to hold it down. 10 04 08a

1910 05 13

Snugly housed in a shed in the rear of a house in St Barnabas' Road reposes a brand new flying machine of the monoplane variety which has been designed and built by the Bros Wallis. The CDN had an opportunity of inspecting the machine and seeing the engine and elevating and steering apparatus tested. We came away greatly impressed with the graceful and workmanlike lines on which it is built. The machine embodies a number of novel ideas and is one of the lightest and strongest yet made. If not exactly the first flying machine that has been seen in Cambridge it is certainly the first one built in the town 10 05 13 a & b

1910 05 20

Inspired by the Oakington aeroplane four young scientific instrument makers named Wallis, Knightley, Booth and Miller, all living in Chesterton, decided to build a flying machine. For their workshops they hired a large barn in High Street, Chesterton, where the machine now lies practically finished. The only thing that has been copied is the warping of the wings for steering which is a Wright patent. In the whole machine there not a single nail, but it is all fixed together with some 3,000 brass screws. It is expected that flights of about a quarter-mile will be obtained. It is throughout an all-British machine and the first and only biplane that has been made in Cambridge, It is to be removed to Royston in a few days where some trial flights are to be made. If there are successful as is probable, an engine will perhaps be fitted to the machine OF 10 05 20

1910 06 03

An Elm man told the court that two years ago he commenced to build a cycloplane. It ran on the lines of a bicycle or tricycle and if one pedalled hard enough it made it fly. It had planes and various things attached to it and was of considerable interest. But it was absolutely worthless as a flying machine. It

was destroyed when its shed had been set on fire and now he was charged with defrauding his Insurance Company. 10 06 03 & a

1910 07 08

A peculiar accident occurred to the new Wallbro' airplane built by Messrs P.V. & H.S. Wallis during the course of a trial run. Through some means or other the machine turned a complete somersault and, although Mr P.V. Wallis, who was driving, jumped to the ground unhurt, the aeroplane suffered considerable damage. The machine, which is housed in a field near Abington, landed upside down. Messrs Wallis Bros are by no means disheartened through the accident OF 10 07 08

1910 07 08

The new 'Wallbro' aeroplane built by P.V. & H.S. Wallis of 12, St Barnabas Road, met with a very remarkable mishap during the course of a trial run in a field near Abington. They intended to test the pulling powers of the engine and not attempt a flight but the machine suddenly rose completely off the ground and sailed along at a height of three or four feet. She continued to fly like this for several yards and then the back part was seen to rise in the air and the front to sink towards the ground. Finding himself unable to right the machine Mr Wallis stopped the engine and sprang out. The monoplane slowly turned a complete somersault, eventually landing upside down and there lay with its wheels in the air like some giant insect on its back. 10 07 08b

1910 07 29

Cambridge Bank Holiday Mammoth Show in aid of Addenbrooke's Hospital. Exhibition of the 'Wallbro' Aeroplane fitted with engine complete but owing to lack of space and possible danger to the public a flight cannot be permitted. Thurston's electric bioscope. Firework Display – advert 10 07 29b & 29d

1910 08 06

Wallbro all-British aeroplane made by R.S. & P.V. Wallis, the Cambridge motor cycle cracks, was exhibited at the Mammoth Show in a large marquee and the engine and tractor were set going at intervals attracting an enormous amount of interest ... between 4,000 & 5,000 people inspected it. The committee decided that a flight should not be attempted owing to insufficient space for starting and possible risk to the public ... August - TT 10 08 06, CDN 10 08 02 Wallbro destroyed in storm when hanger collapses [5. 5]

1911 03 31

A scheme for the development of Port Holme, Huntingdon, as an aviation centre is virtually an established fact. Mr James Radley, who was the first aviator to use the meadow will play a prominent part in the undertaking. Hangars will be placed on the meadow near the Great Northern Railway where his original hangar was erected. Works have already been taken for the construction of aeroplanes and numerous sheds are expected to be erected shortly. Most aviators consider Port Holme to be the best aviation ground in England, easily accessible from London and the North 11 03 31f

1911 06 09

What were believed to be five aeroplanes passed over Cambridge for a few minutes on Thursday afternoon. They were at a great height and travelling at a rapid rate and were out of sight in about a minute and a half. When observed, two were first noticed. These were followed at some considerable interval by three others. One of the spectators suggested they were pieces of paper, and another that they were birds. But their colour – they looked perfectly white – the absence of lateral movement and their peculiar oscillating flight with occasional glides, seemed to contradict this idea. They crossed the town in a north-westerly direction, evidently moving at a great speed 11 06 09b

1911 07 28

Littleport Show held in the grounds of Highfield House was a gratifying success. A great many were attracted by the announcement that an aeroplane flight would be attempted and they were not disappointed. The machine – one of the Bleriot type belonging to the Midland Aviation Syndicate –

was wheeled to an adjacent field and the aviator made several flights. He would have continued longer but for an accident to the propeller, one of the arms having broken in the course of a descent. The machine was exhibited in a tent until five o'clock when it was wheeled out. A force of police kept the crowd under control. A large field was selected for the start. The fen men, who had never seen an aeroplane before, described it as 'like a self-binder'. There was a large cheer when the aviator took his seat and started the engine. In the first attempt the machine travelled from one end of the field to the other at a height of about 15 feet. It then headed towards Lt Downham and rose beautifully while the crowd cheered. It had travelled some hundreds of yards when the aviator, for reasons best known to himself, descended in a field of corn. In order to facilitate a start for another ascent the aeroplane was taken to a clover patch. There was a considerable delay and the majority of the crowd had returned to the show ground when the machine was seen again to rise to 50 feet but then the aviator planed down to earth again. It did not descend so well as on previous occasions and it was reported that an accident had happened. A proportion of the propeller had broken off. This put an end to the flying and the crowd dispersed, satisfied that a flight had really been made 11 07 28c Littleport show aeroplane flights – 11 07 28j

1911 08 11

A new attraction at the Cambridge Mammoth Show was one of Mr Spencer's captive balloons. Attached by a steel hawser to a powerful traction engine, it made a number of ascents giving passengers a magnificent view. The display culminated with a thrilling parachute descent from 1,600 feet by the famous aeronaut Captain Spencer. He dropped like a stone, then the parachute spread out and he floated down near Jesus College grounds. The balloon, freed from his weight sprang upwards, the sun glistening on its yellow casing before descending at Exning where it was the object of a great deal of attention from a large crowd 11 08 11 & a

1911 08 25

The proposed army manoeuvres have been abandoned due to the drought. This is a disappointment to local tradesmen. The tender of G.P. Hawkins had been accepted for the supply of bread to troops expected at Cambridge, Gt Wilbraham, Babraham, Fulbourn and elsewhere. Bicycles hired for the use of the advance party engaged in constructing telegraphs were returned to Robinson's bicycle showroom. The Royal Engineers encamped near Whittlesford station will take down the telegraph posts and wires already erected. Landlords of village inns have cause to regret the abandonment for the advance party of troops had evidenced a liking for a variation of camp fare. 11 08 25b [4,4,4,5]

1911 08 25

There was considerable excitement near Histon railway station on Wednesday evening when the Army monoplane which has been manoeuvring in the district was seen flying towards the village. Not being at a great altitude, the queer-looking machine was seen quite plainly and the public had a good view of it as it hovered towards Dry Drayton before finally alighted at the military manoeuvres camp at Hardwick 11 08 25g

1911 09 01

Aviation is much too expensive to be enjoyed by the ordinary man. But Mr H.W. Holt, a graduate of King's College, has been building from his own patents a machine to carry one person. When finished the 'Dihehedral triplane biplane tandem' will be one of the lightest and smallest of flying machines. The greatest part of the metal work has been done by Mr Holt at the University Engineering Laboratory and the machine is being erected on the premises of Mr Harry Williams in Victoria Park. It should soon be complete and ready for flying 11 09 01e

1911 09 01

Large crowds have witnessed successful flights during the week by the Army airmen encamped at Hardwick. Lieut. Cammell, flying his own Bleriot monoplane, was expected to arrive from Hendon shortly after dark on Friday night and petrol flares were lit on the camp ground which acted at once as beacons and as a guide to the most convenient place to land. But at Baldock he ran into a storm and was compelled to alight. 6 a.m. on Saturday. He got the machine out and arrived early next morning.

He later made another flight when the sight of the aerial monster combined with the noise it created terrified some farm horses. 11 09 01f

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A captive balloon attached by a steel hawser to a powerful traction engine, made a number of ascents at Cambridge Mammoth Show, giving passengers a magnificent view. The display culminated with a thrilling parachute descent from 1,600 feet by the famous aeronaut Captain Spencer. He dropped like a stone, then the parachute spread out and he floated down near Jesus College grounds. The balloon, freed from his weight sprang upwards, the sun glistening on its yellow casing before descending at Exning where it was the object of a great deal of attention from a large crowd 11 08 11 & a

1911 08 11

Alphonso Smith, one of the passengers along with Messrs King, Pamplin and Wallis in Captain Spencer's balloon describes the landing in a field near Exning. 'Some horses were greatly frightened and rushed about frantically, one breaking down a fence and escaping. Some oxen proved more sensible. They looked quietly on and took it all in. Many willing villagers squeezed the gas out of the balloon and were rewarded for their services. After ten minutes one of Mr King's drivers arrived in a motor car and we were rapidly covered back to the Mammoth Show in time to witness the splendid display of fireworks' 11 08 11i An ancient certificate will stir memories of older readers who

remember the Mammoth Shows. It was presented to Alphonso Smith, a boot and shoe maker, and records that he ascended in balloon 'Enchantress' from Cambridge on August 7th 1911 and descended at Exning one hour later. It is signed by Percival Spencer, aeronaut of Highbury whose other activities included parachute descents and airship flying. 56 07 06a

1911 08 25

There was considerable excitement near Histon railway station on Wednesday evening when the Army monoplane which has been manoeuvring in the district was seen flying towards the village. Not being at a great altitude, the queer-looking machine was seen quite plainly and the public had a good view of it as it hovered towards Dry Drayton before finally alighted at the military manoeuvres camp at Hardwick 11 08 25g

1911 09 01

A practical joker drove into Wisbech in a powerful racing car and announced that Grahame-White, the famous airman would fly into the town that evening. A large crowd gathered in a field selected for the landing but there was a high wind blowing and it was announced he had landed at St Ives. The crowds reassembled next morning and scores of cameras were placed in position. But the news broke that the whole thing was a hoax. The man had circulated the same story at March and crowds of people also waited there 11 09 01g

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Large crowds have witnessed successful flights during the week by the Army airmen encamped at Hardwick. Lieut. Cammell, flying his own Bleriot monoplane, was expected to arrive from Hendon shortly after dark on Friday night and petrol flares were lit on the camp ground which acted at once as beacons and as a guide to the most convenient place to land. But at Baldock he ran into a storm and was compelled to alight. He arrived early next morning. He later made another flight when the sight of the aerial monster combined with the noise it created terrified some farm horses. 11 09 01f
Aviation at Hardwick, 1911 – exploits – 58 01 24b and 58 01 31c

1911 09 01

Lieut. Barrington Kennett in his aeroplane descended in a field midway between the villages of Elsworth and Papworth, his flight being interrupted by the wind. Many people went to see the machine, a Bristol biplane no.F8 of the Air Battalion. He resumed his flight next morning, six or seven people being interested enough to view the start at 5am. The aeroplane rose gracefully as a bird and was soon out of sight in the direction of Huntingdon 11 09 01h

1911 09 22

Cambridge folk will regret the death of Lieut Reginald Cammell, the gallant Army airman who was killed at Hendon while flying a new Valkyrie machine. He had extensive service with army dirigibles but then took up the heavier-than-air type of machine and had flown a Bleriot monoplane to the recent Army Air Battalion encampment at Hardwick where it had been in a hangar for several days 11 09 22c & d

1911 10 13

Mr Moorhouse paid a second 'flying visit' to Cambridge. The footballers playing on Midsummer Common abandoned their game at once when the machine came into view over Castle Hill. The aeroplane looked as if it must come down among the crowd, but the airman managed the descent very

cleverly, and, travelling a short distance only a few feet from the ground, eventually alighted very smoothly rather less than a hundred yards from the railings on the Maid's Causeway side. On his ascent the machine rose gracefully and easily over the trees and the river. It quickly attained a height of nearly 1,000 feet before he made a circle over Chesterton and then sped off towards Huntingdon, He is an intrepid young man of whom more will doubtless be heard in the future 11 10 13b

1911 11 03

Two unusual events occurred at Oakington. Several women had obtained employment in a neighbouring village gathering potatoes, but on Tuesday decided to strike for more wages. As they could not come to terms, they left the work and returned home. Much excitement was caused on Wednesday afternoon by the sight of an aeroplane flying over Oakington. This is the first one that has passed over this village. Many of the inhabitants had a good view of it 11 11 03f

1911 11 03

The airman who made two wide circuits of Cambridge on Wednesday evening was Mr W.B. Moorhouse, who had flown from Huntingdon, whither he returned in the dark, guided by the flarelights on Portholme. The journey of 40 miles occupied 42 minutes – 11 11 03

1911 11 24

On Wednesday afternoon a monoplane was observed to be flying over the fields to the west of the allotments at Bourn, going in a northerly direction and apparently following the Old North Road. The airman seemed to be flying at a height of three or four hundred feet. Meanwhile work on the church tower is progressing. Outside the spire had been nearly covered in new lead sheeting and inside workmen are shoring up the tower above the great western arch. 11 11 24g

1911 12 01

The young airman, W.B.R. Moorhouse flew over to Cambridge and alighted on Butt's Green, departing two hours later. He took with him a parcel of shoes made for him by Frank Dalton of Bridge Street that he'd ordered a week ago. Several improvements had been made in the monoplane since his last visit including a bottle labelled 'Cherry Brandy' fixed inside the 'conning tower' fitted up with a flexible tube with a mouthpiece so that he could take a 'nip' when so disposed. The news rapidly spread and several hundred spectators watched his take off. 11 12 01j

1911 12 08

Mr Moorhouse made a fine cross-country flight from Huntingdon aerodrome, landing at Northants County Golf Course. After lunch he made a circuit of several villages before returning. He found travelling slow and the cold was so intense he had to descend to a lower altitude. On Tuesday he made a flight by moonlight, making a number of circuits, descending safely by the light of petrol flares 11 12 08b

1911 12 29

Several Cambridge people cycled to Huntingdon to view the flying at Portholme Meadows. They saw two machines in the air and watched Mr Moorhouse make a beautiful spiral volplane (guide with the engine cut off), then give chase to some sea-gulls. The landing ground was practically flooded and when descending his machine entered the water, causing the tail to lift and turning it completely over. Down it went into the water with Mr Moorhouse in the well of the machine. Numbers rushed to help but before they arrived they saw the aviator come crawling out from under the plane and walk knee deep to a horse and trolley. He seemed none the worse for his involuntary cold plunge 11 12 29 also another plane crashes on landing

1912 04 19

E.P. Frost letter of appreciation from Aeronautical Society on his retirement as president – 12 04 19h

1912 04 26

Mr W.B.R. Moorhouse covered the 80 miles between Huntingdon and Brooklands at a speed of a mile a minute. Steering a 50 h.p. Gnome engined Bleriot monoplane, the aviator started at 7.05 am, the weather being perfect. A little more than an hour later he was passing over Hendon but then ran into a thick mist at Hampton Court and had to descend to within 60ft of the earth in order to steer a good course. He made a safe landing at Brooklands at 8.25am. 12 04 26f

1912 06 28

A crowd of about 10,000 watched Mr H. Ewen, the 'Daily Mail' airman give a flying demonstration from the University O.T.C. parade ground. The Caudron biplane was wheeled out of the enclosure and the engine started up. He ran along the ground for about 150 yards then rose into the air amidst the cheers of the crowd. On reaching a height of 600 feet he flew over Grantchester and Trumpington. The wind was too treacherous for him to attempt any risky manoeuvres but the public were quite satisfied and cheered as he landed. Mr Ewen was called upon for a speech but felt he had given a 20 minutes exhibition and had done his task. 12 06 28e [1.16, 3.25] Mr W.H. Ewen who conducts the orchestra at the Cambridge New Theatre won fame as one of the first airman to fly to Cambridge. He founded the first flying school in Scotland and flew across the Firth of Forth in 1911. He made a flying tour on behalf of the 'Daily Mail' and chose Cambridge as his first stopping place, landing his Caudron biplane on the University Rifle Range, Grange Road on 27th June 1912 - CDN 30 09 27a, b & c

1912 06 28

Some little excitement was caused on Saturday evening by several balloons travelling over Gamlingay in a northerly direction. One dropped within shouting distance and having ascertained its whereabouts, rose and floated away. The aeronauts were taking part in a long-distance contest from Hurlingham and some reached Yorkshire before descending. 12 06 28k

1912 07 12

Nardini, the Italian airman, landed at Huntingdon after an adventurous journey from Birmingham. His destination was Hendon but he lost his way in the Midlands and ran into a terrific thunderstorm, his machine being buffeted in an alarming manner by the hurricane. Suddenly he observed an open space, and making a volplane landed by pure luck in the centre of Huntingdon aerodrome. The airman was almost frozen and his hands were numbed. The monoplane suffered some slight damage in the storm 12 07 12h

1912 08 23

Aeroplanes and war – second lecture – 12 08 23d

1912 09 20

His Majesty the King visited the Hardwick aero camp where he spoke to Colonel S.F. Cody, and inspected his famous biplane. He showed much interest in the position of the propeller, which is behind the pilot and not in front, as in the other biplanes at the camp. The King then commanded Col Cody to make a short exhibition flight. In a few seconds the plane was in the air, making several circuits, flying both high and low before pulling up gracefully within a few yards of the Royal party. The King then inspected the naval biplanes before leaving. Shortly afterwards Mr de Havilland arrived in a biplane from the 'seat of war' – the manoeuvres around Linton 12 09 20e also 20d, photos 20f, g. Airmen's triumph, Mutlow Hill taken etc – 20h; fighting Horseheath – 20i, Castle Camps – 20j, airship 20k 20l 20n. Newmarket operations – 12 09 13i & j & l training near Fen Ditton, Airship camp, John French visit, cavalry at Royston – 12 09 13h; photos arrival Liverpool Territorials at station, camp at Linton – 12 09 13m; air scouts, Col Cody biplane photo – 12 09 20

A great feature of the army manoeuvres has been the work of the air-scouts. Large crowds visited the Hardwick aero-camp and were rewarded when a biplane was spotted which was not of the ordinary pattern. "That's Cody on the machine he won the War Office competition with the other day", said a Sergeant. Planing gracefully down he approached at a great speed and alighted exactly opposite the sheds erected for storing the aircraft. His plane has no long tail and the pilot sits right in front with the

engine and propeller behind him, giving a clear view for observation purposes. 12 09 20m. Swaffham Bulbeck see plane – 12 09 20o. Swavesey has been little affected by the grand manoeuvres; a plane passed over and on three armed cyclists scouts rode through. But a village man driving a load of crates of empty beer bottles along the Huntingdon Road was captured by a detachment of soldiers. When first challenged he was not inclined to stop, but speedily did so when he had to look down the barrels of rifles. After the cart was overhauled he was allowed to proceed 12 09 20n.

1912 09 27

Great excitement was caused in Carlton by the Army Manoeuvres. Several airships and aeroplanes passed over and one 'plane came down in a field at Willingham Green, crowds of people rushing to have a close view. Thousands of soldiers marched through the village and large numbers camped for the night, some in fields, some in yards and some in the school playground. The school was closed for two days as no work could possibly be done while it was so surrounded with traffic and the children were, of course, receiving instruction by watching the manoeuvres 12 09 27k

1913 04 11

A new water plane designed and constructed at the Huntingdon Aeroplane Works by Messrs J. Radley and Gordon England was taken to the Port Holme in the hope of a trial flight. High winds made this impossible until Tuesday morning, when the breaking of a driving chain just as a start was being made, still further delayed operations. The first flight was made on Thursday, Mr England, covering about two miles at 20 to 30 feet from the ground, and demonstrating the power of the machine to remain in the air with only two of the three engines running 13 04 11 p12 CIP

1913 04 18

Percival Spenser was the first balloonist to take an active part in military aeronautics when his balloon was attached to an armoured-plated train drawn through dense tropical forests then released to rise so he could give the position of the enemy's forces. He made balloon ascents at the last two Mammoth Shows which will be long remembered. On the first occasion the balloon was carried to Exning and on the second Mr Spencer and Miss Spencer made a double parachute ascent and later ascended again, coming down near Manea Station. 13 04 18 p8 CIP

1913 04 18

Some excitement was caused at Cottenham by the descent of a balloon in a field of Mr Lewin's on the Oakington Road. There were two occupants who hailed from Farnborough and were out for military practicing purposes. The balloon was packed up and conveyed to Cambridge station by Mr F. Norman 13 04 18 p12 CIP

1913 04 25

Sir Charles Rose, the Liberal MP for East Cambs, died with tragic suddenness in his motor car as he was returning from Hendon Aerodrome where he had taken a flight in a biplane. It had circled at a moderate height for seven minutes and on landing he said he had enjoyed the trip. The Coroner ruled that the excitement and exhaustion of the new experience had brought on a heart failure. An aeroplane was not suitable for those getting on in years. Aeroplaning should be left to the young, vigorous and robust. Sir Charles might have survived many years had he lived a placid and quiet existence. 13 04 25 p10 CIP

1913 06 20

Soham balloon

1913 10 24

Future of aeroplanes – their part in war, lecture by Hiram Maxim, inventor of Maxim guns, to University Engineering Society. Considered helicopters, balloons and aircraft powered by steam engine 13 10 24 p5 CIP

1913 10 24 CIP

Gamlingay see Bovril airship

1913 11 14

The Bovril airship encountered a strong headwind while passing over St Ives and the pilots decided to land. But it was impossible to bring the machine to earth. Repeated efforts were made to descend but the airship refused to answer to the landing gear and they were compelled to remain aloft in a wind sufficiently strong to render the situation distinctly dangerous. It was not until within six miles of Cambridge that they were at length able to come to ground. The pilots set it down to some extraordinary atmospheric phenomena which cannot be explained. 13 11 14 p8 CIP

1914 05 22

Gustav Hamel monoplane - 6,000 people assembled in the Rock Meadow for sensational exhibition of flying in an 80 h.p. Morane-Saulnier of compact build. He circled above the field, skimmed the ground and then looped the loop to the accompaniment of loud cheering. Opportunity was given to fly with Mr. Hamel and the fee fixed with £5 5s. There were six bookings. 14 05 22 CIPof [1.25,4.2] 14 05 22k

1914 05 22

Our First Local Fliers. The principal attraction for Cambridge residents yesterday (Thursday) afternoon was the visit of Mr. Gustav Hamel, the well-known aviator, with his monoplane, and 6,000 people assembled in the Rock Meadow, Cherry Hinton, over which Mr. Hamel gave a sensational exhibition of flying. Mr. Hamel showed that he was a complete master of his machine, an 80 h.p. Morane-Saulnier of compact build. He circled above the field, skimmed the ground and then looped the loop to the accompaniment of loud cheering. Opportunity was given to fly with Mr. Hamel and the fee fixed with £5 5s. There were six bookings. 14 05 22 CIPof

1914 05 29

Mr. Hamel after his brilliant display at Cambridge departed for Paris with the intention of bringing back a new Morane-Saulnier monoplane, driven by a 160 m.p.h Gnome motor. He is said to have left Boulogne at half past one o'clock, and afterwards to have been seen at Calais, but after that all traces of his flight have been lost. The weather in the Channel on Saturday was extremely unfavourable for flying. Search was made in the Channel and the North Sea by ships, but on Tuesday all hope was given up 14 05 29 CIPof 14 05 22l

1914 03 07

School of Aviation to be established near Cambridge 14 03 07

1914 03 27

Mr John Edmund Thornely, the 17-year-old son of Thomas Thornely of Merton Hall, 'looped the loop' at the Eastbourne aerodrome. He is believed to be the youngest airman to perform this feat and the first Englishman to do so on a biplane. He intends to do so again, with and without passengers. A native of Cambridge, he was educated on the Army side of Malvern College and began training a year ago. He has always been interested in all forms of sport and is a good rider, a good shot and has driven motor cars in races at Brooklands – 14 03 27i & j

1914 05 22

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1914 05 29

Lost in the Channel. - All hope has now been abandoned of again seeing Mr. Gustav Hamel, the famous aviator, alive. Mr. Hamel, after his brilliant display of flying and looping at Cambridge on Thursday last, departed for Paris with the intention of bringing back a new Morane-Saulnier monoplane, driven by a 160 m.p.h Gnome motor with which he intended to compete in the Aerial Derby round London on Saturday, Owing to the weather conditions the race was postponed, but Mr. Hamel was not aware of this, and he started from Villacoublay at half past four o'clock on Saturday morning, and landed at Le Crotoy, near Lille, about an hour later. He was afterwards reported as having landed at Hardelot and later at Boulogne. He is said to have left Boulogne at half past one o'clock, and afterwards to have been seen at Calais, but after that all traces of his flight have been lost. The weather in the Channel on Saturday was extremely unfavourable for flying. Search was made in the Channel and the North Sea by ships, but on Tuesday all hope was given up. 14 05 29a,8 - 14 05 29 CIPod

1914 07 31

Aeroplane. On Tuesday morning, the residents of Eversden were greatly excited at seeing a biplane soaring overhead in a north-easterly direction - 1914 07 31 CIPof

1914 08 07

Mammoth show double parachute descent from balloon owned by Spencer Brothers; descended in field near Milton Road level crossing; balloon landed near Baitsbite Lock. Ascents for passengers

1914 10 23

A new barracks is to be erected on the flying ground on Cherry Hinton Road, recently used by Gustaf Hamel. It will provide for 1,000 men, thirty to a hut. It needs to be completed in six weeks and work will be found for 400 men, working day and night. The builders are W. Sindall. It will include officers' mess, cookhouses, shower baths, horse shelters, stores and guard houses together with a comfortable institute with reading room and canteen.

1914 11 20

The Germans had a great network of spies, County Councillors were told. The county should be purged of all spies or people of treasonable actions. The Emergency committees which were being formed should ensure people were not installing secret petrol stores for Zeppelins or watch for partisans with carrier pigeons or wireless apparatus. University Laboratories were doing much undisclosed research involving explosives and chemicals and employed a high proportion of aliens. A man who had watched army evolutions on Parker's Piece was pursued and arrested by two police constables after an old lady denounced him as a spy. A large number of naturalised German people lived locally but in the zeal to put down espionage an enormous amount of injustice had been done. 14 11 20

1915 01 22

German Aircraft Raid.—German aircraft made a raid on the East Coast on Tuesday evening and dropped bombs on Gt. Yarmouth, Sandringham, King's Lynn, Cromer and Sheringham. The accounts of the attacks vary in details, notably in regard to the number of people killed, but they agree on the main facts. The first attack would seem to have been made on Yarmouth at about half-past eight o'clock. It was too dark to discern the hostile craft, but nine bombs appear to have been dropped on the town and two people killed. A soldier was also injured, and several of the townspeople sustained wounds from broken glass. The damage to buildings does not seem to have been extensive. Subsequent raids were made on Sandringham and King's Lynn, and on Cromer and Sheringham, where bombs were dropped. Two people were killed at Lynn. The accounts in this case speak definitely of a Zeppelin. Whether the raids were made by the same aircraft cannot be said but a telegram from Amsterdam speaks of four German airships passing over the Dutch islands earlier in the day. 15 01 22 CIPof

1915 05 07

W.B.R. Moorhouse, airman, died of wounds 15 05 07 p4; early flier – history – 65 08 14b

1915 08 06

Playhouse to feature Capt Villiers' wireless airship to fly around the auditorium controlled by wireless apparatus from stage and bomb audience with balls 15 08 06 p4

1915 08 20

Down in field. —An Army plane came down recently at Thurling, in the neighbouring county of Northamptonshire. The pilot was Lt. Broughton, said to hail from Cambridge, who was on his way from Farnborough to Cambridge, and descended at Thurling to ascertain the locality. By a piece of bad luck he landed in a ditch, in the middle of a field 15 08 20 CIPof – photo – 15 08 20d Ch.

1915 09 10

Zeppelin Raid. The Press Bureau on Wednesday issued the following report; Three Zeppelins visited the Eastern Counties last night and dropped bombs. Anti-aircraft guns were in action. Aeroplanes went up, but were unable to locate the airships. Fifteen small dwelling houses were demolished or seriously damaged and a large number of doors, windows, etc., were broken. Several fires were caused but were promptly extinguished. There was no other serious damage. The following casualties have been reported: Killed 10, seriously wounded 20, slightly wounded 23, missing (believed buried in debris) 3. Incendiary and explosive bombs were also dropped in London. Total casualties in all areas: Killed 20, seriously injured 14, slightly injured 72 15 09 10 CIPof

15 09 24

Ely danger from zeppelin raids – lights should be extinguished early at the fair; edges of paths should be whitened to lesser dangers

1915 12 01

Zeppelin raids – are we fully prepared. The 'elaborate precautions' examined - 15 12 01a, b

1916

The Cambridge School of Flying started in 1916 and was open to those applying for commissions in the Royal Flying Corps for training as air pilots. A field was rented from Mr Lilley, a farmer in the old world village of Harston. Soon afterwards only cadets entering the R.F.C. were admitted. After the serious side was finished for the day it was natural that young men of high spirits should have an occasional 'rag'. They removed the sign from the village pub and fixed it to the gate of the church. An investigating policeman found his bicycle missing; it was found in the branches of the highest tree. The villagers were very tolerant and forgiving, friendships were formed and some found life's partners in this romantic old village 39 10 21b & c & d Cambridge School of Flying operated from field at Hardwick, had French Caudron biplanes – memories of visit in 1917 – 66 12 03

1916 02 23 CIP

Protection against raids,—There are signs (says the writer of Town and Country Topics) that the matter of our protection against Zeppelin raids is being taken up much more seriously than was the case until quite recently. Cambridge has had its scare, and that has stimulated action. Our protest against supineness has been emphasised by our townsmen hearing the sounds of exploding bombs by night, and the increased stringency of the light restrictions, and the heavy fines imposed by transgressors by the Borough magistrates show that we have arrived at a realisation that we are not immune, or, at any rate, that it is wisest to lock the stable door betimes. A walk through Cambridge on an average evening reveals, however, that a good deal still remains to be done, and we believe the present temper of authority is such that it will see to the doing of it. We hope it may be so, for we think experience has proved beyond question that darkness is the best safeguard against attack. We believe also that Cambridge is about to follow the example of other East Anglian towns, and issue more particular instructions to persons as to what to do, and what to avoid doing, should we be so unfortunate as to find ourselves being bombed. That is another step in the right direction, and one

which will be appreciated by all good citizens. Perhaps now we shall hear no more taunts of scare-mongering hurled at those who have felt it their duty to offer warnings

1916 03 01

Regulation of Lights - To avoid any unpleasantness (says a Histon paragraph) the special constables wish to draw particularly the attention of householders, shopkeepers and all others whom it may concern to the fact that the strictest attention must be given to lights in their homes, etc. Dark blinds are not sufficient to meet the requirements of the Act. All blinds must be shaded with some dark material (green for preference) and no crevices may show at the top, bottom or sides. Red Blinds with no shading are not sufficient. If these regulations are not carried out the defaulters will only have them-selves to blame if trouble is brought upon their shoulders. In the case of hostile aircraft approaching the county all motor cars, motor cycles, pedal cycles and carts will be stopped and the drivers ordered to put out their front white lights and get on the side of the road and remain there until the danger is past. The rear red light must not be extinguished and they must not travel without lights. Further all lights in houses and buildings which cannot be absolutely darkened must be extinguished.

1916 04 26

East Coast Zeppelin Raid. Yesterday the War Office issued the following: Three Zeppelins are reported to have come in from seawards over the Eastern Counties last night. Two crossed the coast of Norfolk shortly after half-past ten, and another followed at about 11 o'clock. A few incendiary bombs have been dropped up to the time of issue of this communiqué. Later in the day the following announcement was made: Last night's air raid on the Norfolk and Suffolk coasts appears to have been carried out by four Zeppelins, only two of which made any serious attempt to penetrate, inland. About 70 bombs appear to have been dropped. One man is reported seriously injured. No further details as to casualties are yet available. Cambridge

1916 08 02

Dog's Tea. — A certain person was having tea in the garden (at Eversden) when an aeroplane attracted her attention. When she returned it was to find a neighbour's dog had run off with the contents of her plate. 16 08 02

1916 08 23

A captured German aeroplane of the Albatross type, the gift of the Government to the University. When the aeroplane is erected it is to be housed in the Engineering Laboratories when a small charge to view. The machine, is to remain in Cambridge as the property of the university. All the parts are here and the machine appears to be in good condition with the exception of the propeller, which was smashed, and a British one substituted for use in this country. The aeroplane is a two-seater Mercedes six-cylinder, 130 horse-power machine, and was used: for observation purposes only. The number is A374, and it weighs exactly a ton 16 08 23 CIPof 16 10 1, f CIPof 16 08 23a [1.14]

1916 09 06

Zeppelin raid – Cambridge received warning that enemy airships had crossed the coast but undisturbed by the sound of their engines; airman who shot one down awarded VC – 16 09 06a

1916 09 20

Lights Out. The more we gain experience from others as well as ourselves the more we are able to appreciate the soundness of darkened streets and windows as, a precaution against Zeppelin attacks. There is little doubt that we have been helped in our time of peril by the obscurity which has been carefully and wisely prepared, and instead of being censured or railed at, all the people who have been concerned in enforcing the lighting regulations ought to be regarded as public benefactors, and made much of. The little personal inconvenience which has resulted from these precautions is nothing compared with the strain and anxiety which would be passed through under an actual raid. Some Cambridge people have had this unpleasant experience, and will be able to render public services by telling their irritable friends what a raid is really like, and warning them of the probable consequences to themselves and their neighbours of disregarding regulations framed really for their safety, and not,

as so many of them profess to believe merely of their, annoyance. The writer has seen at a number of places in East Anglia the results of Zeppelin bombing, when the raiders, by accident, have managed to hit a building, usually some humble cottage, and can assure readers that such results are no trifling matters, whilst the shock to nervous people is lamentable. So we hope that in place of grumblings at the powers that be we shall all do our best during the coming .long dark nights loyally and wholeheartedly to second the efforts of those who are trying to protect Cambridge from aerial assault, and to safeguard the lives and limbs of their fellow townsmen.

1916 10 04

Tribunal; includes: Bodger for book keeper; Eaden Lilley – 118 men have joined up; Cambridge Automobile Co making parts of motor lorries for carrying flying machines; Stearn for photographic operator & dark room developer

17 04 18

“The battle of the Gogs” – fine operations by Cambridge cadets; film made by A.J. Pointer of Victoria cinema. Includes filling bombs, march to battlefield, attack and counter-attack including planes, bombs and gas – 17 04 18a; photos – 18c

1917 05 09

Killed In Action, — News has been received that Lt. Clifford H. Butler, who, previous to the war, was assistant solicitor to Mr. Ashley Tabrum, Clerk of the Peace and Clerk to the County Council, has been, killed in action. Lt. Butler was an M.A. of Jesus College, Oxford. He was placed first in the 1st Class Honours List of the Solicitors' Final Examination and was awarded the Clements Inn and Daniel Reardon Prize. After serving some years as assistant to the Clerk of the Peace for the East Riding of Yorkshire he came to Cambridge as assistant to Mr. Ashley Tabrum in 1913. In October, 1914, he joined the ranks of the Public Schools Battalion and in December, 1915, he was awarded a commission in the Black Watch. He went out to France with his regiment early in 1916 and was shot through the head while leading his men on. Death was instantaneous. Lieut. Gerald S. French, of the Royal Flying Corps, son of Mr. Sidney French, of Llandaff Chambers, Cambridge, is reported missing. Mr. French has no official news at present, but he heard unofficially that his son was shot down.

1917 05 16

Flight Serg. Frederic Slingsby, RFC, awarded Military Medal – was attacked by German, he fired 140 rounds then landed plane after pilot killed – 17 05 16g

1917 05 30

Future of aviation, E.P. Frost envisages transatlantic aerial ship with ten engines, fuel being picked up mid ocean; had been writing about such things in 1883 – 17 05 30b

1917 06 06

Cambridge School of Flying and Aerodrome Company Ltd at Hardwick is equipped with hangars housing five Tractor Dual Control biplanes; until recently was only open to military pupils but now training for pupils intending to enter the Royal Flying Corps or Royal Naval Air Service. The machines are Cauldron biplanes. Frequently open for the public to witness exhibition flights – 17 06 06a; illustrated advert 17 06 06b

1917 09 26

Stackyard fire at Eversden. A fire had broken out in the stackyard at the Manor Farm, Great Eversden. It was sad to see the corn stacks burning, and the stables and granary were burnt to the ground. A heap of nine ton of coal also caught fire. To add to the excitement, an aeroplane was seen hovering around, and descended in a field behind the fire. The airman had lost his bearings and thought the fire was an aerodrome. The volunteers were put on guard while the airman had a night's rest, and next day he started off for his destination. 17 09 26 CIPof

1917 10 24

The Zeppelin. Cambridge was disturbed from its long immunity from air raid warnings on Friday, when Zeppelins "made an unwelcome reappearance in this part of the country." It was gratifying to find that immunity had not rendered our people in any way intractable. The police instructions were carried out in most cases without any protests, even when those instructions went to the extreme length of directing men to extinguish their pipes or cigarettes. A few householders were a little difficult to manage with regard to lights, but that was probably due more to ignorance than from obstinacy, and now that those householders know that the danger was really near, and that carelessness on their part might have produced a calamity similar to the kind which befell two or three London areas, they will probably show more prudence in the future. The streets were extremely quiet as well as dark, and we congratulate both police and public upon the success of the measure adopted for our protection.

1917 10 31

Lighting offences at time of the Zeppelin raid, 19th October – 17 10 31a

1918 02 06

Chamber of Commerce; three new industries to be started – aeroplane industry, Miss Clarke's toys and tapestry – 18 02 06d

1918 02 27

Aeroplanes of the future – lantern lecture by G.P. Bailey – would be a passenger carrier, flying Atlantic 18 02 27a, b

1918 05 01

Aeroplane crash. Two men of the R.A.F. were up in an aeroplane ten miles out of Cambridge when some portion of the wings broke away & the machine came to earth. One man was found among the wreckage and the other about 20 yards away. An R.A.F. officer spoke at an inquest of seeing the machine stunting 18 05 01 CIPof

1918 05 22

Inquest on pilot killed when flying over Cambs; flying same machine as that in which airman killed earlier; engine stalled – 18 05 22a

1918 05 29

Airman killed when plane fell and burst into flames – 18 05 29c

1918 07 31

Two airmen killed in flying accident – 18 07 31b

1918 08 21

Flying fatality inquest – 18 08 21a

1918 10 23

Fatal accident at aerodrome – inquest at EGH – 18 10 23b

1919 05 05

Histon raised £13,800 and had plane named after it; account of its service when piloted by Cambridge man – 19 05 05b

1919 08 18

Memories of Albina Wherry, VAD nurse on station and aircraft precaution squads; describes scenes on Red Cross railway trains full of wounded soldiers – 19 06 18f

1919 11 10

Undergraduate killed in aeroplane accident at Fowlmere – 19 11 10d

1920 09 01

Hardwick Aerodrome sale of airplanes and equipment owned by Cambridge School of Flying; planes including Avro two-seater, some damaged, sold cheaply; hangars – Ch 20 09 01b

1920 11 08

Fowlmere aerodrome buildings could be used for the opening of a discharged soldiers; village to help solve the unemployment problem

1920 11 11

Air supremacy, discoveries will be made at Cambridge; when undergraduates fly – address to scientists - CDN 20 11 11

1920 12 13

Sheep in eleven parishes escape from folds on Friday night; having become disturbed they broke down the hurdles of their folds and broke loose. Might have been frightened by aircraft, but none was flying; was caused by meteors – 20th Dec p3

1921

Oxford v Cambridge air race established 1921 – feature – 90 12 20a

1921 02 16

Parachute descent by Major Orde Lees witnessed by several thousand in Huntingdon Road meadow – 21 02 16a, b

1921 07 06

Fowlmere aerodrome may be converted into school for mentally defective children – 21 07 06d

1921 08 24

Croxton air smash; two Duxford officers killed – 21 08 24a

1922 02 01

Squire Frost of West Wrattling – obituary – 22 02 01c; portrait – 22 02 01a

1922 08 12

Parachute jump from balloon, came down at Burwell [3.24]

1922 11 24

Sir - I much regret to read the reports of two fatal accidents caused by being run down by motorists. This is no time to be anti-rear light, anti-dazzle or diddle-daddle, but to make a move and harness ourselves with the times that we live in, and not in the times of our forefathers. I do not profess to be a prophet, but as "Motor Cycling" predicts the time when lights will be on aeroplanes and "Tourist" predicts lights on pedestrians I will predict the times when aeroplanes will be in the form of motor-cars, fitted with folding wings made either to coast or fly and pedestrians will wear mechanical-propelled boots which will by law be compelled to have a light both rear and front - R.V. Leete

1923 10 15

An Avro biplane was taking two passengers over Cambridge yesterday afternoon and when returning to the licenced aerodrome on Barton Road, the under-carriage fouled the hedge, causing the machine to fall almost vertically on its nose. The pilot was slightly injured. The passengers were uninjured and motored the pilot to the Evelyn nursing home where he was detained. The machine, which stands in the field in an almost vertical position, appears to have suffered but little damage other than that sustained by the under-carriage 23 10 15 [4.1]

1924 05 13

An aeroplane came to grief while alighting in a field on Barton Road, Cambridge, and the pilot and two passengers had a narrow escape from serious injuries. The plane was attached to Edward's Flying Service, which provides flights from a field off Barton road. It appears that the pilot was about to land and was manoeuvring for a position suitable to the direction of the strong wind when the engine stopped, and he was forced to land. The aeroplane crashed into a hedge and turned completely over, its back being broken 24 05 13

1924 05 19

A Belgian balloonist came down at Ely in a pond ten feet deep. He was taking part in a big race from Brussels for a £2,000 prize. He crossed the Channel during the night and had a very rough journey. His balloon is said to be the smallest in existence and the pilot had to stand all the time he was in the air. It came down at Norney farm and was pulled out by Mr Herbert Cross, an Ely farmer 24 05 19

1924 09 10c

At a meeting of the Hornchurch parish council a communication from the Air Ministry was laid seeking permission to divert certain footpaths which cross the site they have acquired for the erection of a large aerodrome capable of accommodating at least 500 aeroplanes. The aerodrome, midway between London & the East Coast is to be part of a scheme for the aerial defence of London. During the war the site was used as a temporary aerodrome and pilots stationed there brought down the first four Zeppelins

1924 11 05

Four R.A.F. men had an exciting experience in an aeroplane crash at Barway. The Vickers Vimy developed engine trouble and a landing was made in a stubble field. For a score of yards the aeroplane ran along the ground at the rate of nearly 80 mph and all would have been well had not a four-foot dyke barred the way. The machine crashed into the opposite side of the dyke, its nose penetrating the earth. The impact caused the 'plane to swerve completely round and almost turn a somersault. Fortunately it rebounded on a even keel and the airmen were able to alight, only one sustaining slight injuries 24 11 05

1925

Cambridge University air squadron formed [5.10]

1925 02 05

Flight-Lieut Cairns of the Duxford Flying School was injured in an accident whilst flying at Steeple Bumpstead. About noon the plane was observed to be in difficulties and crashed towards the ground. The airman jumped from the machine when near the ground and although he escaped death he was found to be suffering from somewhat serious injuries when admitted to Addenbrooke's hospital.

1925 04 02

Most people in Cambridge saw the giant R.33 airship as she passed over on her flight from Cardington to Pulham air station, Norfolk. Those who were not aware of the intended flight were attracted by the noise of the engines and were rather surprised to see the ponderous vessel instead of a battalion of aeroplanes. She passed over Cambridge at about 8.30 and proceeded via Newmarket. The flight was of an experimental nature and on arrival at Pulham the R.33 carried out a number of air manoeuvres.

1925 08 29

Sir Charles Walston expressed pleasure that the Air Ministry were anxious to avoid pollution of Offa's Brook by petrol or oil from Duxford airfield. For a great many years inhabitants of Newton had drunk the water from the brook & he had never heard of any case of typhoid in the locality. Now by strange coincidence, within a fortnight of the examination of the sewage system of the aerodrome by Ministry experts, two cases of typhoid had occurred. "With all due respect to the expert opinion of

these Ministries", he said, "the combination of oil and sewage effluent may be favourable for the breeding of dangerous bacilli"

1926 03 11

Prof B.M. Jones told a meeting: "I look forward to seeing in my lifetime a state in which flying is as safe, and has the same order of expense as railway travel, carried out at an average speed of 200 miles per hour, night and day". Up to the present the amount of flying done was not sufficient to affect the ordinary man in the street & the flying industries were small but aeroplanes were reaching the stage when they could take part as a real world force. He feared there was a big future for aeronautics if there was another war

1926 06 07

A large crowd assembled in the grounds at Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge to see the daring leap from an aeroplane by Mr Geoffrey V. Peck. The descent was made with a Guardian Angel parachute from an aeroplane travelling at nearly 100 mph and 1,000 feet high. Crowds rushed to the adjacent field where Mr Peck had landed; he was surrounded by eager autograph hunters and signed innumerable photos. Passenger flying was very popular and the pilot will loop the loop and corkscrew at a slightly higher cost. The two aeroplanes belong to the Southern Counties' Aviation Company and are quite reliable so anyone who would like to fly should avail themselves of this opportunity

1926 06 08

Sir – the aeroplanes which make daily trips from a field off the Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge, are becoming something of a nuisance. They have been here nearly a month and show no signs of going away. They fly low over the houses and are even more of a nuisance on Sundays. A quiet residential district like the Rock Estate is not an appropriate district for amusements of this kind which should be carried on over open country, far from places where people live and work – John Bousfield, Cavendish Avenue.

1926 06 09

Sir – you published a letter complaining of the noise and inconvenience caused by aeroplanes at present operating from a field on Cherry Hinton Road. These 'gypsy' aircraft companies which tour up and down the country giving joy-rides are educating the country up to aerial transport. They are giving people an "air-sense" which is essential before aviation can become at all general; people have to be made to realise how extraordinarily safe flying is even at present, when several problems of control have yet to be completely solved – S.V.C., Christ's College

1926 06 16

A meeting of the Women's Peacemakers' Pilgrimage was attended by a large audience at Cambridge Guildhall. In the next war they would have aeroplanes dropping poisonous bombs that would destroy civilians who had never been near the firing line. They must create such an atmosphere of repugnance that the nations dare not go to war. There were hundreds of people in Newmarket who were not yet converted to the idea of the League of Nations and it was their duty to make converts of all who had not yet joined them.

1926 06 22

The science of air manoeuvring was demonstrated at Duxford Aerodrome when a rehearsal for a part of the Hendon Air Pageant was carried out by R.A.F squadrons based at Duxford, Northolt and other aerodromes. Fifty-six planes, six squadrons and nine machines took the air at a given signal. The display was witnessed by a number of civilians who were smothered in clouds of dust when the formation was about to take to the air and on landing.

1926 08 18

A Duxford aeroplane crashed on the Gog Magog golf course, killing the pilot. The fatality occurred on the first tee, the machine first hitting the road and crashing through the hedge; as it struck the

ground it burst into flames and was soon reduced to ruins. Bullets were flying around all over the place. Some time after the accident the pilot's tunic was found with a fountain pen and letter, both only slightly damaged. His hat was found intact and inside this was his name. We understand he had recently inherited a large sum of money 26 08 18

1926 09 03

Capt Ronald Leavey, who was burnt to death when an aeroplane he was piloting crashed and burst into flames near Leatherhead, is not unknown to Cambridge. Two months ago he visited Cherry Hinton where he took many passengers up at different times for pleasure flights, and also accomplished many noteworthy feats of daring in the air. His untimely end will be regretted by all who met him 26 09 03

1926 10 30

Two aeroplanes from Duxford Aerodrome came down on Coldham Common, one being overturned and considerably damaged. One of the machines in a flight of five passing over Cambridge was observed to be in trouble. The single seater fighter had been engaged in firing practice at the Wash. He made a good landing, coming to rest near the bathing-place with just a buckled wheel. A similar machine went to its assistance but was not so fortunate; it struck some bumpy ground and turned right over, coming to rest flat on its back with the wheels in the air 26 10 30

1927 04 19

Sir – there are a large number of persons of both sexes who are intensely interested in aeronautics and would welcome the formation of a light aeroplane club. Learning to fly in this way is moderately cheap and invigorating. This county is especially suited for flying as in almost every village several fields may be selected which would make excellent landing grounds. – R.C. Jonas 27 04 19

1928 01 07

Everybody's buying parachutes. They are war-time parachutes purchased from the Air Ministry and are being sold at the business establishment of a well-known Cambridge alderman. A friend of mine dropped in to purchase one and was interest to note the date and place of origin stamped on each. The inscription in black lettering reads: "W. Holmes and Son Ltd, Orwell, Cambs". The date was 28th November 1918, just after the Armistice. It is a curious coincidence that these parachutes made for war purposes a few miles from Cambridge had come back nine years later to be sold in a Cambridge emporium for the practical uses of motor car covers, dust-sheets, tents and the like

1928 03 28

The largest bombing aeroplane in the British service, the "A" came down on Newmarket Heath and was exceedingly fortunate to make a safe landing. P.C. Bacon saw the aeroplane cross over Newmarket and turn back. It was evidently in distress for it had a strong searchlight turned on the ground as if seeking a landing and was firing red warning lights from its signal pistols. The descent was rather hurried and the plane bounced ten feet into the air from the impact with the earth. One of its two engines had ceased to work; mechanics put it right and stopped a leak in a petrol tank and the plane resumed its flight.

1928 03 31

A special issue of the Daily Mail dated 1st January 2000 has been printed in conjunction with the Ideal Home Exhibition. It contains quite a lot of news about Cambridge, including the Inter-Varsity Air Pushball Match which was won by Cambridge in front of a crowd estimated at 2,250,000. On the same day there was a 'Varsity girls' boat race in a covered-in stadium in Battersea Park. An air raid undertaken by undergraduates after a rugby match, which showered the women's colleges with confetti and a host of miscellaneous garments, has led to a complete ban on aeroplanes. The Aeroplane Proctor is to visit every private aerodrome in Cambridge to see that all undergraduates' machines are put out of action for the term.

1928 05 30

The work of repairing the fabric of St Ives parish church, which was seriously damaged by a British aeroplane on 23rd March 1918 having been completed, a service of thanksgiving was held. The Bishop of Ely said it was hard that the burden of repairing a church should fall upon our generation, but we inherited these priceless treasures from those who had made sacrifices in days gone by. About £600 was still required for rehangng the bells and replacing the clock

1928 09 10

Captain Harry Spencer, the famous balloonist, was killed while attempting to release a balloon piloted by his son which had descended on the roof of a house belonging to Rugby School. He became affected by the escaping gas and rolled off the roof. He was responsible for the design of the famous parachutes with which he made hundreds of descents and in 1922 his son and daughter, then 14 and 16 years of age, made simultaneous parachute jumps with him at Cambridge from a height of 3,000 feet.

1928 09 29

The Chief Constable of Huntingdonshire, Capt J. Rivett-Carnac, is learning to fly and proposes to buy a Moth aeroplane. He said he was learning for fun: "Although in these small planes you can take off and land in any field you cannot often get from door to door within a county any more quickly than by motor-car. Only on very rare occasions do I foresee the need of an aeroplane for my official duties"

1929 03 13

The University Proctors have considered regulations for students who desire to use aircraft during term time. Undergraduates flying their own or civilian aircraft may lead to annoyance from low flying and accidents. A Light Aeroplane Club has already been formed which gives facilities for flying within a few miles of the University. Now no student may fly as pilot or passenger during term time without written permission from his parents and tutor. Those offending will be liable to be punished by suspension, rustication, expulsion or otherwise.

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1929 03 16

The new edict with regard to flying by undergraduates is well timed. Conington aerodrome is used by the Aeroplane Club and now comes news of a private aerodrome for Cambridge. Marshalls, automobile engineers of Jesus Lane are opening it shortly. It is on the main Newmarket Road less than two miles from Cambridge. There is a railway station 200 yards away and a 20-minute bus service connection. One hangar has already been erected and the whole site is about to be put down to grass. Marshalls are agents for the de Havilland Aircraft Company and already have their own demonstration machine ready at the aerodrome

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1929 04 20

Visiting R101 at Cardington – CDN 20.4.29

1929 05 15

Alan Cobham's flying circus plans; Varsity flying rules – CDN 15.5.1929

1929 06 10

Cambridge air pageant for opening Marshall's - CDN 10.6.29

1929 06 11

Conington air thrills – CDN 11.6.1929

1929 10 12

Many Cambridge people were among the thousands who saw the R101 at Cardington during her final tests. Every approach to Bedford was thronged with cars and cyclists, many of them from great distances. During the worst of the traffic there was a three-mile queue of almost stationary cars. Nearly 150,000 cars passed the mooring post and filling stations did a roaring trade. Many sold out of petrol. Hotel keepers had reason to be thankful for the presence of the great airship, while picnickers lined practically every road.

1929 11 01

The R.A.C. has decided to extend the benefits of its 'Get You Home' service to members of the Club whilst flying. It has hitherto provided a relief car free of charge for their members who have broken down on the road but a considerable number are now either owners of light aeroplanes or are members of flying clubs. Should any of them whilst flying be compelled to make a forced landing they will be able to send for an R.A.C. relief car and be conveyed to the nearest railway station. If the plane is of the folding wing type that can be towed on a public road the R.A.C. is prepared to pay for its conveyance to any town within the limits of the scheme. CDN 1.11.1929

1929 11 01

The giant airship R101 passed over Cambridge after a visit to Sandringham. It appeared shortly before three on its way towards Cardington. The great ship glittered in the low November sun as though made of silver and hundreds of people came running into the streets as they heard the noise of the engines. As it receded into the distance it appeared like some strange monster floating on the misty horizon. At Newmarket races there was a cessation in the betting and all race glasses were trained towards the sky. CDN 1.11.1929

1929 12 14

F.A. Ridgeon, the Cambridge Town Football Club's inside left, travelled by aeroplane to Sussex for the F.A. Amateur Cup tie with Southwick. There was some doubt whether he could make the match owing to duties in Stamford preventing him from travelling by train. Hearing of his difficulty Mr D.G. Marshall of Aviation Hall generously placed his Moth aeroplane at his disposal. His son, Arthur Marshall, would have piloted the machine but he had gone on an air trip to Austria so a de Havilland pilot was engaged for the journey. This is, we believe, the first time an amateur footballer has travelled to a match by air. Cambridge won 2-0. CDN 14.12.1929

1930 01 17

The R100 airship which made a long flight from Cardington in fog was seen as a fleeting but fascinating object over Swavesey. Emerging from the mist like a spectre of the sky, the giant vessel attracted admiring attention as the sun glinted on her silvery nose, which, approaching head-on, was turned into the semblance of a full moon. She circled round the locality before disappearing in the fog in the direction of St Ives. 30 01 17

1930 04 23

A News reporter experienced the thrill of looping the loop in the joy-ride aeroplane now giving flights from the Cherryhinton Road ground: "We bounced across the bumpy field and before I was aware of it we had left the ground. We climbed until I saw the hand of the pilot's altitude clock creep round to the 2,000 feet mark. Suddenly we seemed to be hurtling downwards at a tremendous speed and I felt I had left my tummie up above. I saw fields and roads above, then the sky came back over the top. I suppose we had been upside down, but it seemed as if it was the world that had turned over. It was great fun" 30 04 23a

1930 06 16

By the courtesy of A.G. Marshall of the Newmarket Road Aerodrome, who placed a plane at the disposal of the C.D.N., our representative was able to secure a bird's eye view of the bumping races. "I could hear nothing of the general buzz which must be going on by the river, only the roar of the engine and the voice of my companion through the speaking tube. He tells me he is regulating his height so that we are well in gliding distance of a landing place all the time. I am very comforted – I should hate to drop on Jesus or a crew just making a bump", he writes. 30 06 16 & 16a

1930 06 21

Aviation history was made when a Puss Moth aeroplane, one of the latest models of its kind, arrived at Cambridge airfield. It carried English oak caskets of samples of Leicestershire granite chippings. A cargo such as this has never before been transported by air. The idea of the flight was to further the interests of commercial aviation and to test opportunities afforded by this method of increasing sales 30 06 21aa

1930 07 21

The annual 'No More War' meeting of the Cambridge Peace Council was held indoors instead of on Parker's Piece because of heavy rain. But accompanied by the Boys' Brigade Band they proceeded with drenched banners through the rain-swept streets. They met to ensure the catastrophe of 1914 did not occur again. One must remember the menace from the air. It was possible to turn civil aircraft into war craft and chemical factories into works for the manufacture of poison gases and lethal rays. 30 07 21g

1930 08 12

The air exercises have begun and squadrons of fighting planes took off to engage in bitter combat. Until the very last minute of peace 250 aeroplanes were being secretly moved to vulnerable points and the men in command have been planning their attacks. Five night bomber squadrons, nine day bomber squadrons and 11 fighter squadrons will be engaged. Some are fitted with robot controls which can relieve the pilot for extended periods on long flights. 30 08 12

1930 09 27

Mr W.H. Evans who conducts the orchestra at the Cambridge New Theatre won fame as one of the first airman to fly to Cambridge. He founded the first flying school in Scotland and flew across the Firth of Forth in 1911. He made a flying tour on behalf of the 'Daily Mail' and chose Cambridge as his first stopping place, landing his Caudron biplane on the University Rifle Range, Grange Road on 27th June 1912. 30 09 27 b & c

1930 10 06

Rumours of the R101 airship disaster were received with incredulity in Cambridge where thousands of people had seen it passing over. Early on milkmen and postmen had the story that it had crashed in flames, but details were lacking. Inquiries in London confirmed that the greater part of the passengers and crew had perished and a special edition of the C.D.N. was issued. Amongst the victims was Walter Radcliffe, a rigger on the airship, whose wife is a daughter of the late Mr Charles Isaacs, the well-known Newmarket racing correspondent. 30 10 06b-e

1930 10 20

The 'Westland Wessex' three-engined six-seater cabin monoplane de luxe arrived at Marshall's aerodrome. A CDN representative, seated in a padded brown leather seat with arm and head rests found it glided so smoothly that he could scrawl down his experiences in his best hand. From the air the new estate at Milton Road gave the appearance of a toy town, King's College chapel was a landmark and the white-fronted Central Cinema very prominent. There is no vibration and the businessman can take his secretary, for letters and notes are typed with ease. 30 10 20

1931

In 1931 Dr Norman de Bruyne, then aged 26, set up the Cambridge Aircraft Construction Company which produced the Snark, a rakish four-seat light, strong monoplane monoplane. The first flight was uneventful, apart from the engine stopping while it was flying over Cambridge, but it landed safely. It was held together with casein glue which had been used on all wooden aircraft. Then he set up a new company, Aero Research at Duxford where he developed Aerolite, formaldehyde glue which was used during WW2 for the construction of motor boats and transport gliders. In 1947 the firm became part of CIBA 87 09 11

1931 01 23

Huntingdonshire county council sanctioned the use of Wyton Aerodrome as a municipal airport. Some said it was wrong for the children at the nearby county sanatorium to have aeroplanes always buzzing about, especially if one crashed near the building. 85 per cent of the 120 children were from other districts and if parents knew there was an element of danger they would not send them. But it was an ideal site and were the council going to say 'We don't like it because it is going to frighten little children'. (Laughter) 31 01 23c & d

1931 04 23

A thrill of romance marked the departure from Marshall's Aerodrome of a gleaming silver Puss Moth monoplane bearing its bridegroom pilot, Mr A.G. Marshall, and his bride on the first stage of their honeymoon. He took his seat at the controls, the propeller whirled and the graceful machine glided forward. In the next few seconds it was rising steeply into the wind, while rain fell from a heavy cloud. The bridal couple however were quite cosy in the saloon cockpit. 31 04 24e

1931 06 19

An aerobrist was killed at the University air pageant. He was flying an Avro, looping the loop, rolling and spiral diving when the machine appeared to break and crashed to the earth. Mr Honour, ground engineer at Marshall's Flying School, said that tools were kept at the aerodrome for extricating pilots but some delay was caused as the machine was made of metal, not wood. He obtained a hacksaw to cut part of the wreckage and within 20 minutes the pilot was taken to Hospital, terribly injured. 31 06 19b

1931 07 17

Marshall's Aerodrome was visited by a party of continental airmen when ten planes, including two containing young ladies, flew in from Heston Aerodrome. After tea and a chat they left by motor coach for a hurried tour of the colleges before flying out again. It is the first time any private French and Belgian pilots have paid an organised visit to England. 31 07 17i

1931 07 31

A serious accident occurred during a performance by Capt. Barnard's aerial circus at Port Holme, Huntingdon following a passenger flight. A young woman had just been up for a trip and, on alighting, walked around the wings into the revolving propeller. The blade struck her left shoulder, smashing the bone. It was not revolving at great speed, otherwise she would have been killed outright. The force of the blow stopped the propeller instantly. Despite the mishap the programme of aeronautics continued and the passenger flights proved very popular 31 07 31a

1931 08 21

A heavy, gusty wind and driving rain greeted Captain C.D. Barnard and his famous monoplane, the Spider, when he visited Cambridge. But when it abated a number of people took trips knowing they would be dry in the plane. 20 readers of the CDN had been given free tickets for a ten-minute flight and enjoyed the experience; one young lady laughingly remarked she felt 'a bit funny' coming down. 31 08 21e

1931 10 09

Glider built by Slingsby and Armstrong of Scarborough on display in Slingsby's workshop – photo – 31 10 09f

1931 10 16

Mr J. Wentworth Day of Wicken Old House acted as mechanic for Sir Malcolm Campbell, holder of the world's motor car speed record, in the practice runs for the 500 miles race at Brooklands. They approached 112 mph but dense clouds of smoke burst from the back and it appeared as though the car would go up in flames. Afterwards he followed the final laps in a private aeroplane. 31 10 16b

1932 02 16

The Deck family has played an important part in pharmacy and public life in Cambridge for 130 years. Isaiah introduced the custom observed for 80 years of firing rockets on New Year's Eve, Arthur made balloon ascents with his friend Henry Coxall, while Alderman Deck was chemist to the Prince of Wales while a student at Trinity. He presented his Royal Arms to the Corporation and these are now in the Cambridge police court. The business continues to thrive under Reginald, with a new optical department. 32 02 16b

1932 04 15

Sir Alan Cobban visited Ashwell with his flying display. A large crowd watched the tricks and racing in the many different kinds of machines used. There were passenger flights, not only in the airspeed liners, but also in an open plane, a cabin monoplane, an autogiro, a glider and, for those who wanted an extra thrill, a plane set apart for aerobatics. In one event a pilot shot six balloons tied to a post with a revolver from a fast-moving plane. 32 04 15b

1932 06 22

The Prince of Wales landed in his red Puss Moth monoplane at Marshall's aerodrome. He jumped hatless from the plane, then donned a boater and drove to the Leys School where he opened the new squash courts and sports ground. On his return he was assisted into his raincoat in preparation for a lofty flight in search of a favourable wind before he stepped into his monoplane, soared gracefully aloft and headed for London. 32 06 22a

1932 07 08

Windows of the houses in Sawston were rudely shaken by a heavy explosion, followed after a brief interval by another equally loud. People ran into the streets and rumours were rife – two aeroplanes were down, an anti-aircraft gun was being tested at Duxford. The noise was called by huge rockets purchased by the Parish Council as fire warnings. They are intended bring firemen on bicycles to the station where they secure a horse, harness it to the engine and gallop to the fire. It would doubtless soon be got under control – if there was only a water supply! 32 07 08e

1932 07 29

Littleport was plunged into gloom after a fatal accident at the Show. A man died when his parachute became entangled in the rudder of the plane. The machine at once tail dived and drifted backwards over an oatfield. The right-hand wing struck the ground and the propeller dug into the soil. The pilot lay bleeding and about 30 feet from the tail was a mark caused by the body of the parachutist striking the ground. His wristwatch was still going. 32 07 29f

1932 09 02

Mr J. Wentworth-Day of Wicken learned journalism on the 'Cambridge Daily News' and wrote the biography of Sir Malcolm Campbell. He recently dined with the Duke and Duchess of York who displayed great interest in the bird sanctuary at Wicken Fen. He also flew in the first aeroplane to land on the tiny island of Sark in the Channel Islands. 32 09 02d

1932 09 23

Ambulance men had to carry stretchers nearly two miles through boggy fields, sometimes knee deep in swamp, before they could reach the victims of an aeroplane crash near Hauxton. The De Haviland Gipsy Moth, hired from Marshall's Aerodrome, suffered engine failure and struck the top of a tree. The journey back to the ambulance proved more difficult but was helped by a C.D.N. van driver. 32 09 23f

1932 10 14

Cambridge town councillors saw their constituencies from a new angle when they took the air in Sir Alan Cobham's big liner. He was visiting Marshall's aerodrome with his fleet of planes and many gathered to see his display. The Mayor was unable to be present and the deputy mayor preferred solid ground. When the party was about to take off it was discovered to number 13, so the County Chief Constable stepped into the breach and the plane both ascended and descended safely. They made a comprehensive survey of the town with its ring of new housing estates though the new County Hall looked more impressive than the huddled roofs of the Guildhall. 32 10 14a

1933 05 12

A Peterborough pilot had a fortunate escape from serious injury when the aeroplane in which he was flying solo crashed in Manor Farm, Swavesey. When passing over the village he lost his way and dropped down close by the station in an endeavour to find his position. In avoiding one belt of trees he collided with another and crashed almost on the railway line. Railwaymen rushed to his assistance and he was taken to Dr Hart in Mr W. Hind's milk van, which happened to be passing. 33 05 12

1933 05 18

Hangman's Corner, Barton Road presented a scene of excitement when the British Hospital's Air Pageant visited Cambridge and all afternoon there was the incessant 'zoom' of aeroplanes 'taking off' and landing. All-in advanced aerobatics provided a thrill; the 'crazy' flying drew many a gasp whilst equally entertaining was the dancing to music by the tiniest machines in the show. Wing-walking and parachute jumping were presented, together with balloon bursting and a chase after a 'kidnapped' bride. One machine which caused amusement was Mr Heath Robinson's conception of a Chinese dragon: the 'flying motor cycle' 33 05 18 Pauline Gower and Dorothy Spicer were friends of Amy Johnson – indeed they had plans to go into business together, but when Amy continued her record flying the other girls set up a company to give joy-rides to the public, Pauline as the pilot and Dorothy keeping the plane in good trim. They joined the flying circuses which visited the Cambridge area in the early 1930s. The programme always began with a formation flight on which passengers were carried, so that everybody around would know there was an air circus in town. There would be balloon bursting, paper cutting, bottle shooting from the air – an endless supply of beer bottles lined up in front of a screen at which the pilot fired as she flew past. The bottle always smashed (but, say Harry, the gun fired blanks and the bottle was hit from behind the screen with a sledgehammer). Later in the '30's the girls based themselves at Hunstanton, living in a gipsy caravan on Searle's donkey field and giving flights to holidaymakers. Memories 3 Sep 1998

1933 06 01

Sir Alan Cobham's great air display at Marshall's Aerodrome showed all kinds of flying and many were the thrills his pilots provided. During a demonstration aerobatic flight with a passenger the plane dived and looped, twisted and turned and did everything a plane could do. But at the end the hardy individual who had decided to take the flight actually managed to walk without assistance and appeared to have enjoyed his literally hair-raising trip immensely. 33 06 01 33 05 26f

1933 06 07

The Backs near King's bridge were crowded with punts when the Cambridge University Madrigal Society performed the annual rite of singing on the river. As the sun went down and the moon rose from behind the Gibbs' Building, the cawing of the rooks and the noises of the town ceased, and over the water came the sounds of a Brahms' motet. An aeroplane buzzed like an angry wasp across the sky but failed to break the spell of magical voices which softly floated in the air. 33 06 07

1933 06 08

A Newnham College student was summoned for dangerous flying. Mary Barnard said she had taken off from Marshall's flying school on a solo flight and descended to 1,000 feet over her College. But Dr John Bury, who had flown for five years, said she had descended rather rapidly, then flattened out and crossed Corpus Christi gardens at about 600 feet, he could read the letters on the plane quite clearly. As it was the first prosecution of its kind the magistrates decided to dismiss the case with a caution. 33 06 08a

1933 07 17

This area will be scene of aerial activity during night exercises by the RAF. Operations will begin between a raiding force of 108 bombers and 152 fighters, some based at Duxford, who will endeavour to intercept and destroy them. They should be off the ground in two minutes, reach an altitude of 1,600 feet in about ten minutes and travel 30 miles. Cambridge itself is off the map as far as actual fighting is concerned as it is supposed to be covered by mountains. 33 07 17

1933 09 20

The pilot of a Gypsy Moth was summonsed for low flying at Fen Ditton. He had hired the plane at Marshall's aerodrome but then began 'hedge hopping', looping-the-loop and narrowly missing telegraph poles. Roy Fisher, the ground engineer at Marshall's waved a piece of white fabric to try and attract the pilot's attention and then Mr Marshall went up in a Puss Moth in an attempt to bring him down. They flew together but the man did not land with him. He told magistrates he had served in the RAF but was fined £5 33 09 20

1933 09 27

Flying-officer Norman Styche, who formerly lived in Fordham and Cambridge, was one of two men who perished when their bomber crashed at Bamburgh after a successful "battle" against the Home Fleet. Having attending Soham Grammar School he had got books on flying out of the library and learnt all he could. He had previously been in two crashes, but was unhurt in both. 33 09 27

1933 10 18

An RAF flying officer had to make a parachute decent when his plane plunged to earth out of control near Hinxton. He jumped out and landed safely in a copse while his machine hit the earth nose-first and burst into flames, quickly becoming a flaming furnace. Flying Officer Scorgie, who is stationed at Duxford, is now eligible for membership of the Caterpillar Club for that select band of pilots who have been forced to save their lives by parachute. 33 10 18

1934 03 03

Marshall's Flying School had offered to buy Elfleda Farm, Fen Ditton for a public aerodrome, county councillors were told. Financially it would be a very good deal, giving them a profit of £3,000 for land they'd earmarked for smallholdings. But it was a very growing neighbourhood and the aerodrome would be a source of great annoyance to residents who didn't want these noisy things coming at all hours of the day and night. Mr Marshall would be getting a thunderingly good deal, others argued. The sale was agreed 34 03 03

1934 05 05

Sky Devils air circus, Barton Road – 34 05 05, 34 05 07

1934 05 15

Marshall's Flying School propose to carry out improvements to their aerodrome and had purchased Elfleda Farm through which the proposed Ring Road would run. They asked the Council to move the route slightly east. But the Surveyor said this was not possible. The whole of the land is zoned for dwelling houses and this would be have to be borne in mind if any proposals were made to them for further developing this aerodrome 34 05 15

1934 06 15

A student, Cecil Hutchinson, made a dramatic race against time to attend the Cambridge Entrance Examination. He docked at Cherbourg early today on the Olympic on which he had travelled from New York, then chartered an Imperial Airways taxi which arrived at Croydon at 8.45. After snatching a hasty breakfast he flew on the Cambridge where he arrived a few minutes before the examination was due to start. The ship had decided in mid Atlantic not to dock at Plymouth, from which he had arranged to travel by train, so he cabled his father who arranged the air taxi. 34 06 15

1934 07 11

The first air display by the recently-formed Ely Aero Club attracted 2,000 people to their flying field on the Downham Road. An attractive programme of aerobatics had been billed but was marred somewhat by the non-arrival of a number of machines. Despite this the crowd had plenty of thrills and many opportunities for joy riding. Mr H.R. Dimock was the first Ely citizen to own a private plane and his activities in the air had been watched with interest. The club hoped to have its own ground, own staff and own machines. 34 07 11

1934 09 13

Many thrilling flying feats were seen during Sir Alan Cobban's air display at Ely. The most popular machine was the multi-engined Handley Page 'Youth of New Zealand' in which passengers, seated in comfortable chairs in a roomy saloon enjoyed the experience of soaring over the Cathedral. Flight-Lieut Godfrey Tyson flying a 'Lincock' did aerobatics at high speed and took every liberty with the machine while Miss Jean Meakin's wonderful demonstration of gliding was outstanding and Ivor Price made a thrilling parachute descent. As a humorous item an old battered motor cycle was pelted with 'bombs' from the air 34 09 13

1934 09 22

A London pilot from the Klemann Air Services offered people flying trips in his blue Klemm monoplane from a field near the Gibbet Inn, Caxton. But he did not hold a proper licence to carry passengers for reward and the field was not approved as a regular place of landing and departure for aircraft. The landlord said the pilot had landed in his field and said he was looking to start a flying school. He had got permission from the owners, Paines the brewers, to put up an air indicator and applied to the Air Ministry for a licence which had not yet been granted. 34 09 22

1934 09 27

For the convenience of people wishing to travel to Newmarket races by air, the Stewards of the Jockey Club have approved the laying out of a private landing ground on the exercise ground north-east of the Rowley Mile Stand. It will be open each race day. No hangars have been erected but picketing gear and chocks will be available. Petrol and oil can be obtained by arrangement with Turner and Hore, Heath Garage. Charges will be two-and-six for landing plus one-shilling a head for all occupants 34 09 27

1934 10 02

Sir – since the demolition of the military aerodrome at the end of the war, Newmarket has taken a back seat in aviation activities because of the possible danger of aircraft upsetting nervous racehorses. But the opening of the special landing ground on the Heath may dispel the fears of trainers. Newmarket has a bigger call for speedy air transport than most towns. Bury St Edmunds will soon become an airport, Cambridge has the advantages of a splendid flying school and there is an Aero

Club at Ely. Now perhaps we may look forward to a local flying club here – Edward Milner, Heath Villa, Newmarket. 34 10 02

1934 10 16

Col Roscoe Turner and Clyde Pangbourn, the Americans, arrived at Mildenhall for the England to Melbourne air race. Their plane, a huge dull grey Boeing Transport, was the 15th to reach Beck Row. Another machine landed on the old aerodrome at Conington. No damage was done, the monoplane being forced down through engine trouble. The pilot was Mr Lowdell, and the 'plane has been entered by Lord Nuffield. Mechanics were at work on the machine early this morning. Competitors are to see a film of the route to Australia at Mildenhall Town Hall on Thursday. 34 10 16

1934 10 19

Mildenhall air race to Australia – 34 10 19, 34 10 20

1934 11 17

Sensational revelations concerning Germany's war plans were made at a meeting in Cambridge Guildhall. Speaking to the University League of Nations Union, Mr Wickham Steed, a former editor of The Times, said they had imported enough arsenic ore to make poison gas sufficient to swamp Europe twice over. The next war is likely to come without warning and many be commenced by an overwhelming night attack. General Goering, at the Nazi Air Ministry has built 85 underground aerodromes this year and had at least 2,000 aeroplanes, he claimed. 34 11 17 & a

1934 12 04

Lord Rutherford presided at the first meeting of Cambridge University Democratic Movement. There is a great fear of the power of military aeroplanes making a sudden and devastating attack on defenceless cities involving the destruction of combatant and civilian alike. Air warfare of any kind should be abolished, he urged. Vyvian Adams praised his work at the Cavendish Laboratory. None could hope to isolate himself from the surrounding dangers. The question was did we want human development or human destruction by scientific means. 34 12 04

1934 12 11

A young airman who set out from Marshall's aerodrome ended his flight in the River Thames which he chose as a landing-place in order to save his own life and those of many Londoners after he had nearly run out of petrol. He had landed at Cambridge in his Moth aeroplane but did not fill up with petrol then ran into fog on his journey home and got lost. To land on the Thames was the best thing he could have done, for a Moth tearing down a street at 50 miles per hour does not give people walking there much chance of escaping injury. His machine floated and he was taken off by tug. 34 12 11

1935 03 01

A flight of three RAF aeroplanes were forced down near Cambridge. Two landed in rough fields near Dry Drayton and turned upside down. None of the pilots was injured. The other made a forced landing at Smithy Fen, Cottenham. The flight was of a very recent pattern single-seater fighters and had taken off from Duxford to practice for the Hendon Air Pageant. They ran into thick fog and received wireless instructions to make a forced landing. The squadron leader mistook a field of wheat for grass and turned his plane completely over on the rough surface. His flying helmet was covered with mud as a result of his skidding along upside down 35 03 01

1935 01 31

Gypsy Moth forced landing field Long Road – photo – 35 01 31

1935 02 12

Cambridge University gliding club formed [I5.1] University Gliding Club celebrate jubilee 1960 – when formed in 1935 they used a horse to retrieve aircraft – 60 09 23e

1935 03 01

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1935 04 08

Residents need not be alarmed by the appearance of heavy bomber aeroplanes during the next few nights. A tactical exercise will involve bombers flying a series of 'co-ordinated attacks' on selected military targets to introduce new crews to the role of the night bomber. It will provide actual practice in extended navigation and the technique of bombing by night, the co-ordination of raids and the employment of the signals organisation. But there will be no 'bombing' in this neighbourhood and no explosive bombs will be dropped anywhere. It is essential these exercises should be carried out during the hours of darkness and the Air Ministry is to restrict night flying to the minimum possible. 35 04 08

1935 06 15

I dialled '0' and asked for Teversham 331. The answer came, "Marshall's Aerodrome". I said "How about that little trip we spoke of earlier". "Righto, come along at once. In a few minutes I arrived at the aerodrome and found a 'plane awaiting me. I tied my camera to a buttonhole in my mackintosh as we took off and made for Baitsbite where we could see the boats at First Post corner. Close co-operation between the pilot and myself was made easy by the speaking tubes and my helmsmen showed adaptability to the requirements of aerial photography, allowing me to obtain some interesting photographs. 35 06 15

1935 06 20

A number of readers of the 'CDN' saw the town from a new angle. Winners of our Free Flights Competition in connection with Sir Alan Cobham's air display went on a formation flight round the town. A number went up in the 10-seater air-liner while others took a 'flip' in the open planes which take part in the display. The rush of air past the face, the thrilling sensation as the plane dipped and the sight of Cambridge spread out mosaic-like made for an exhilarating experience and the winners walked more jauntily after their trip than they did before it! 35 06 20a

1935 07 02

The largest number of British warplanes ever assembled in one spot have arrived at RAF Mildenhall for the Silver Jubilee review. Three hundred and fifty in number, from 38 squadrons, 'planes of the bomber, night bomber and fighter type have turned the green aerodrome into a sea of silver. But poor visibility caused the practice take-off to be postponed twice and owing to the time it takes to get airborne only 200 of them will actually participate in the fly-past 35 07 02a

1935 07 05

Excitement was caused at Mildenhall where the 350 aeroplanes – worth practically £1,000,000 – are assembled for the Royal review when fire broke out at Horrox sawmills, about a mile away from the aerodrome. The Royal Air Force received a telephone call asking for help and a lorry load of men armed with fire extinguishers was despatched together with a fire engine. It was the luckiest chance that the wind was blowing away at the time otherwise the fire would have spread with lightning rapidity and there would have been a danger of it reaching as far as the aerodrome. 35 07 05c

1935 07 05

The King had 'Jubilee Weather' for his review of the Royal Air Force at Mildenhall Aerodrome where he inspected 28 squadrons of the RAF – five miles of aircraft in all – on the vast landing ground. The machines ranged from tiny 230 mph Gauntlets to giant bombers. Twice he left his car to

learn some of the secrets of our latest flying machines including the power-driven machine guns mounted in the turret of an Overstrand bomber 35 07 05 & a 35 07 05c 35 07 06, 35 07 06a, 35 07 06b, 35 07 08

1935 07 19

Huntingdonshire County Council decided to accept £5,000 from the Air Ministry for the Wyton Aerodrome and £3,000 for the lands adjoining. Alderman Wood Horn said this was of great interest both nationally and locally. The land at present is occupied by sanatorium buildings but this had served its purpose and the money could be used to pay off the outstanding debt on the hospital 35 07 19

1935 07 25

Two RAF 'Bulldog' planes taking part in night flying exercises over Cambridge had to make forced landings when they were caught in a thick mist which came up suddenly. The pilots looked for an emergency landing ground and saw the lights of Marshall's aerodrome below. One succeeded in landing just before the fog blotted out the lights but the other five had to keep on flying until one ran out of petrol and had to make a forced landing at Duxford. In doing so the machine crashed and the pilot was slightly injured. 35 07 25

1935 07 31

George Collins, the Cambridgeshire glider champion, was killed during an exhibition flight in Huntingdonshire. He was being towed by an aeroplane and was released at a height of three thousand feet. He glided, did some turns and then two loops followed by a 'bunt' – the first half of an inverted loop. But the left wing folded upwards and came adrift. The glider was completely wrecked. He was an exceptionally skilled young man and no blame could be attached to anybody 35 07 31 & a

1935 07 31

About 2,000 people gathered on Grange Road Rifle Range to see a display of first aid by the British Red Cross Society under air raid conditions. Three bombers from Duxford took part in the raid, exactly as though on active service. As they dived at speeds of 240 mph there were realistic bangs and clouds of smoke. People in the area rushed about screaming and collapsed wounded or from the effects of the gas. When the raid was over the rescue parties, clad in gas masks and decontamination suits commenced work. A musketry party fired on the 'planes during the raid 37 05 31

1935 08 15

A special meeting was called to discuss a complaint from Marshall's Flying School who felt the council was obstructing their business by aligning a road across the existing aerodrome site so they could not compete with a planned municipal airfield. Councillor A.C. Taylor had gone away on vacation but on receiving the agenda had chartered an aeroplane to get to the meeting. Ald Stephen said there had been a number of underhand actions and he wanted an assurance that Marshall's would not be prejudiced. It was agreed that the previous resolution was not in order. 35 08 15

1935 08 19

Sir – I am sorry to hear there is a proposal to construct an aerodrome near Cambridge. There is no town in England where one is less wanted. An aerodrome is the first and most legitimate target for the bombs of enemy aircraft, which would soon wreck our priceless buildings. In peace time we should be worried day and night by the drone of aircraft engines. They should be placed away from cities and important railway junctions as aeroplanes may crash in flames at any time – J.E. Allen, Cambridge. 35 08 19

1935 09 04

A crowd of 2,000 people invaded Marshall's Aerodrome to see a demonstration by M. Henry Mignet of his marvellous little machine, 'The Flying Flea'. Thousands of people would love to fly but could not afford an ordinary plane so he had built 'The Flea' which was a combination of kite and parachute. It cost £70 to build and can do 40 miles per gallon. He took it up to 1,000 feet and then cut

the engine. The little machine floated gently to earth like a parachute and made a perfect landing. 35 09 04b – photo – 35 09 04

1935 10 18

Controversy surrounded the offer of £10,000 from Sir John Davenport Siddeley for developing aeronautical research in the University. Some dons felt it would subsidise research of a military character of pecuniary value to armament manufacturers. But others say the ultimate influence of the aeroplane upon civilisation will be pacific rather than warlike. It was abhorrent that the University should become a centre of specifically military research but this money would be used for work of a fundamental and non-military character 35 10 18b

1935 10 23

A new novel deals with the Cambridge of the future. "Thirty Million Gas Masks" by Sarah Campion imagines 'Something like ten thousand Cantabrigians were wiped out (as every schoolboy knows) in the Air Raid of 1939. There are memorials to the Cambridge dead all over the rest of Great Britain. The enemy cared not two buttons about Cambridge but were aiming at London'. In the book a technical mishap on one of the bombing planes releases a new gas which results in the area being evacuated only to be visited by people in gas masks sent by the Government to test the poison-laden country. 37 10 23 c d e

1935 11 22

The London branch of the Civil Aviation Corps was founded in 1934 and approached Marshall's Flying School who realised that such a corps could become of national importance. They have been coming to the Aerodrome regularly each Sunday and are now building a hangar for themselves where they hope to build a 'Flying Flea' and 'B.A.C. Drone'. Now Cambridge has started a local squadron; any young fellow over 20 years of age who is keen to fly will be welcomed. 35 11 22

1935 12 12

Dr William Wooster told the court he was a member of the Scientists' Anti-War Group and had been standing outside Duxford Aerodrome selling pamphlets entitled 'Air Display Special'. It carried a headnote to say it was not to be sold to members of H.M. Forces but they were seized by police under the Incitement to Disaffection Act. Surely people could be reminded of the sheer horrors of the Great War 35 12 12 & a

1935 12 20

The judge agreed that police had been wrong to seize copies of a pamphlet from a member of the Cambridge Scientist's Anti-War Group at Duxford aerodrome during the Royal Review. They'd been worried following an earlier incident at Mildenhall when a misguided female threw a paper at the King's car. 'The Anti-War Special' was crude, inartistic and in some respects childish. It had been sold by Dr Wooster supported by a bevy of satellites, mainly ladies, wearing badges of a reddish hue. Various ex-servicemen had expressed themselves in vituperative terms and its distribution might have lead to a breach of the peace 35 12 20 & a

1936

A 'Flying Flea' airplane was built by Mr W.V. Smedley of Wisbech in 1936 and tested in Cambridge. But when the test pilot was killed elsewhere, the machine was abandoned 63 10 11d

1936 01 23

Several thousand packed Cambridge Market Hill where from a special platform draped in purple the new King Edward VII was proclaimed. But proceedings were interrupted by the appearance overhead of an aeroplane and as a result of the noise from the engine the Mayor (Ald Wing) had to pause. Undergraduates crowded outside the Senate House where the University ceremony was held. Many of them had cameras and four or five, determined to get a good view of the ceremony, climbed into the huge bowl which stands on a pedestal in the court. 36 01 23c

1936 01 28

The Air Ministry say it is very desirable that a new Cambridge municipal aerodrome site should be provided in the near future. Land at Milton had been recommended by Sir Alan Cobham but this would cost more than £33,000 and take at least two years to build. Messrs Marshall's existing flying ground at Newmarket Road is quite inadequate for present requirements and they could have a new site at Teversham ready in a year, councillors heard. 36 01 28b & c 36 01 30a

1936 02 05

Premier Travel Ltd has been formed to take over the services of Royal Blue Coaches of Chesterton Road and the Harston and District Motor Services. Managing director, E.A. Lainson, says there is a definite need for a good independent transport company. They will offer special excursions to Hunstanton, Southend and Yarmouth, run motor tours to Europe all year round and also conduct a travel agency for steamship, motor coach and aeroplane services. 36 02 05

1936 02 07

The question of a Municipal Aerodrome for Cambridge has at last been settled. Messrs Marshall's new aerodrome at Teversham will be of sufficient size to enable Cambridge to have a fully licensed airport competent to meet the needs of commercial and civil flying. The council will remove the present restrictions on the site and divert a footpath but will have the option of purchasing the undertaking in 40 years and afterwards every ten years 36 02 07

1936 05 09

An inquest on a workman who crashed to his death from the roof of a hangar at Wyton Aerodrome heard that he had been helping to nail the roof on and to do this he stood in the guttering, supporting himself on the boards he was fixing. The contractors said it was not necessary to have scaffolding as erecting it would be more dangerous than the actual work. The men had been told that if they had any qualms about walking along the guttering, they could crawl. None of them did this: they all stood upright as if used to climbing. If a man complained he was given a different task. The firm had offered the relatives financial assistance in conveying the body to Darlington for burial 36 05 09a

1936 05 14

Feltwell aerodrome deaths – two painters fall from top of hangar – 36 05 14

1936 07 08

Mildenhall aerodrome, scene of the first Royal Review of the British Air Force, was further honoured when King Edward visited the station during the first flying tour of R.A.F. stations ever undertaken by a reigning Monarch. After the scarlet and blue Dragon Rapide came to a halt the King inspected three bomber squadrons, two of Handley Page Heyfords and the third Hawker Hinds, and toured the Airmen's Barrack Block. As the visit was entirely unofficial only a mere handful of people knew. 36 07 08

1936 07 24

A large number of civilian aeroplanes were to be seen at Marshall's Aerodrome during a visit to England by foreign amateur pilots. Some 70 were expected but the bad weather upset the arrival of some from abroad. They made a very pretty sight with planes from Belgium, Germany, Holland, Rumania and Switzerland. It is hoped that others from Egypt, Morocco, Portugal and the United States would arrive later. Their occupants took luncheon at Trinity College and made a tour of the colleges before leaving for a reception 36 07 24

1936 07 24

A former undergraduate told the court he had hired a plane from Marshall's Flying School and flown to Caxton where he landed and then taxied towards the Gibbet. There was a haystack between him and the hotel and he hit a pole which had been erected with a wind-sock, but there was no wind-sock. The propeller and two wings were damaged. But he disputed the cost of repairs and said the job could

have been done in three days and two wings were not necessary: he'd had a similar accident at Lympe when the machine had been repaired next day for £35. 36 07 24c

1936 09 21

Mr H.R. Dimock of Ely, an enthusiastic air pilot, had a lucky escape from serious injury when his machine crashed at Cardiff Airport. He had been demonstrating a Super Drone machine in which the pilot sits at the front, the propeller being above and behind his head. Mr Dimock's hat flew off and caught in the propeller, which snapped. Luckily he was flying fairly low and was able to bring the machine down with only a minor crash. His injuries were very slight 36 09 21

1936 09 22

An RAF pilot had a remarkable escape when his Bulldog machine – a single engine fighter – landed on the railway line near Six Mile Bottom. He was engaged in taking weather observations in thick fog when he got into difficulties and descended in a field, crashing through a fence and on to the railway track. The force of the impact cocked the tail up into the air and it became entangled on the overhead wires running beside the railway line. This probably saved the pilot's life. An oncoming train was stopped and passengers wheeled the plane into a field. 39 06 22b pic 36 09 22

1936 10 01

A pilot summonsed for flying at a low altitude over the Cam at Fen Ditton told the court he was carrying a photographer for the Sport and General Press Agency. Herbert Cook was taking pictures of the Bumping Races from a side window using an ordinary camera with a long focus lens. They had to fly across the river and would not have got good photographs if they'd come down to the tree tops. There were a number of other planes from Marshall's flying about. Spectators complained he was too low and had caused one of the waitresses at The Plough to spill the things on a tray in the tea garden. The case was dismissed. 36 10 01 & a

1936 11 03

An RAF pilot and observer had remarkable escapes from death when their plane came down and overturned in a field near the Gogs. The pilot thought the place looked safe enough to land on from the air but when the plane touched earth the rain-sodden ground caused it to smash its nose into the ground and turn over. The pilot's helmet was covered with dirt as a result of being dragged along the ground but he escaped with a bruised lip. The observer was entirely unscathed. Jack Utteridge, who has a petrol station nearby, was an eye-witness. 36 11 03a & 03

1936 11 05

The Air Ministry propose to construct a RAF station at Bassingbourn and approached South Cambs RDC about the possibility of obtaining a supply of 15,000 gallons of water a day. This could be obtained from Croydon Hill at a cost of 10d per 1,000 gallons. The scheme would take 20 months to implement and would also serve nearby parishes. But did any of the parishes want piped water? It would mean a rate of over four shillings for Litlington, Shingay and Wendy and there had been too much money spent on water already, all of which was money wasted. 36 11 05c & d

1936 11 27

The Territorial Army recruiting campaign at the Drill Hall attracted a large number of people including employers of labour, members of the University O.T.C. and boys from the Perse and County schools. The progress of aircraft means that the channel is now a mere ditch over which planes can fly in a few minutes and a defence force must be efficient. This should be voluntary and employers must make some sacrifices and encourage their men to join the Territorial Army, giving them leave and pay when on service. 36 11 27

1936 12 12

Farmer killed in aircraft crash near Caxton Gibbet – 36 12 12c

1937 03 04

Sir Alan Cobham, the world-famous airman, spoke in favour of a nine-bedroom Airport Hotel on Newmarket Road. Every Continental airfield had a hotel where accommodation was available in the same way as at a terminal railway station. A man had a terrible inconvenience when he landed at an airport and a first-class hotel was one of the amenities which was going to make people fly. A rival proposal by Lacons Brewery was withdrawn: people like Mr Marshall who were training pilots were doing a work of very great importance and entitled to reasonable facilities. 37 03 04a & b 37 03 051

1937 03 09

Conditions at Wyton aerodrome are unspeakably bad; contractors should not permit horses to be worked in such horrible conditions and the Air Ministry should be made to construct better roads, magistrates said. A man had been leading horses with a water cart from a concrete mixer to the sleeper track when the front horse went into the mud. He'd run to release the second horse so that should not also go down, then tried unsuccessfully to raise the fallen animal. But it was ankle deep in mud and it was impossible for it to get up. The owner was fined. 37 03 09 & a

1937 03 23

Cambridge Scientists have challenged Government claims that the majority of London houses could construct a gas-proof room. They say it would need to be lined with sheet tin and the joints overlapped with Vaseline. Even so tear gas could get in. Mustard gas could be spread in liquid form from aeroplanes as had been done in Abyssinia. It gave off a vapour so toxic it was lethal if breathed for six minutes. Government-issue gas masks would cost two-and-sixpence each but would not stop cigarette smoke that could make people cough and be sick. 37 03 23a

1937 04 01

Airport Hotel approved – 37 04 01a & b

1937 04 09

Civil Aviation Service Corps first open day at Cambridge aerodrome; bomb dropping contest – 37 04 09

1937 04 29

Five RAF men were killed when two bombers collided near Methwold. Three machines were flying in V formation when the propeller of one caught the tail of the leading machine. Both 'planes fell, one bursting into flames and coming down in a field, the other crashing on the bank of the river Wissey. Part of this machine was submerged in the river. Men rushed to help from Wissington Beet Sugar Factory, half a mile away, and tugs were sent up river with tools. Inhabitants of Stoke Ferry saw the planes collide and two men make parachute decent. The squadron only moved to Feltwell from Scampton a few days ago. 37 04 29

1937 04 30

Marshall's Aerodrome's special fire engine meets Air Ministry specifications for fire, first-aid and crash equipment. It is finished in fire engine red and black, the front seats are upholstered in best selected black hide and fitted with outsized fire and alarm bells. It is designed to meet any possible emergency with an impulse magneto which, together with the dash carburettor flooders and emergency gravity feed petrol tank ensures instant and easy starting in all weathers. 37 04 30

1937 05 01

RAF stations open for Empire Day, Sutton Bridge – 37 05 01a

1937 06 02

An R.A.F. Empire Day display saw hundreds flock to Wyton for their first close-up view of the splendid new air station and the machinery and men behind it. The display consisted of aerobatics by two Hinds, demonstrations by a Blenheim and by an instructor in a Tudor aircraft who showed the right and wrong way of flying. Three Gauntlets flew formation aerobatics and a plane loaded with

bags of flour staged a low bombing attack on a motor car. Wyton's debut was a success in every way and there was not a single casualty of any kind. 37 06 02

1937 06 24

Fatal air crash at Fen Ditton kills Horningsea man – 37 06 24 & a

1937 08 09

An air "attack" is being made on London by 176 light and medium heavy bombers. All through the night they will concentrate their efforts to 'destroy' the capital and opposed to them will be 19 fighter squadrons with a total strength of 222 machines. The 'attack' will continue two more nights unless affected by bad weather. The main object of the exercise is to provide tactical training for the RAF in conjunction with the Anti-Aircraft Division of the Territorial Army and Observer Corps. 'Casualties' will not be assessed. 37 08 09

1937 09 10

Many people assembled at Marshall's Aerodrome to see the competitors in the King's Cup air race pass over on their journey northwards. The first swept in from the direction of Cherry Hinton, roared over the 'drome and were lost in the void beyond, travelling at over 200 mph. But the majority of the entrants made for the wrong aerodrome, heading towards the new one near Teversham and when they discovered their mistake had to bank round towards the town. 37 09 10a

1937 10 08

Duxford aerodrome extension approved – 37 10 08c

1937 10 19

Major-General Ernst Udet, ace pilot during the war, was amongst top German airmen who inspected two squadrons of giant Heyford bombers and the latest Battle Bristol-Blenheims, Harrow, Wellesey and Whitley aircraft at R.A.F. Mildenhall. They went into the body of the Harrow plane and three sat in the cockpit of one of the others before watching the engines starting. The visitors, some carrying small dress daggers, also toured the station buildings including the mobile wireless transmitting, photographic and automatic control sections. 37 10 19 & a

1937 11 19

The new aerodrome at Teversham Corner is a great improvement. Pilots can glide down without having to dodge or scrape over trees or other obstacles and it is a pleasure to land on a flat piece of ground after the ridges on the old airfield. The size and spaciousness of the main hangar is impressive with huge sliding doors allowing any one of the single and twin engined civil airliners in use today to be accommodated with ease. A control tower is being built to replace the small one on the tarmac and a start has been made on a hotel. They should be in full swing when the aerodrome is officially opened next spring. 37 11 19 & a

1937 11 26

An inquest heard that three fighters had been attacking three bombers over Therfield when two machines touched wings and spun to the ground. One man fell out but his parachute did not open. – 37 11 26b – photo – 37 11 24

1938 01 20

Ely Aero Club (Humphrey Roger Dimmock, proprietor) let out planes for private hire but not commercial purposes. They'd received a telegram from a man in Coventry asking to hire a machine for a day. He'd been offered a Hawk for £5. But as the certificate of Air Worthiness was at the Air Ministry the man refused to hire it, saying he was not satisfied with the condition of machine. He'd flown to Ely, having to land at a village because he could not find the airfield, and claimed expenses for the journey and hire of another plane. 38 01 20a

1938 03 18

Wyton court martial over abandonment of Blenheim aircraft – 38 03 18 & a

1938 04 21

Cambridge is to be the subject of an 'air raid' on July 14th. It is actually an ARP demonstration which will take place on Midsummer Common which is to be laid-out in the form of a street and made as realistic as possible. The scenario is that several squadrons of enemy aircraft fly over en route to Birmingham but are turned back and unload their bombs over Cambridge after they are attacked by aeroplanes from Duxford. The whole of the enemy machines are destroyed. Meanwhile the Mayor of St Ives, Mr D. Bryant, has built an air-raid shelter in his garden with the help of his sons. The first in the town, he is giving his townspeople a lead. 38 04 21, 38 04 22a

1938 05 02

Charles Daisley, a library assistant of Coronation Street, was injured when the aeroplane he was piloting crashed at Quy. He was practising forced landings when the two-seater, of which he was the sole occupant, landed in a field and tipped sideways. The front cockpit was damaged by the engine being forced into it. He was in the rear cockpit but sustained a broken nose and concussion. He was one of the first to join the RAF Volunteer Reserve when they started training in Cambridge a few months ago and was doing part of his 15 days' annual training. 38 05 02b

1938 05 10

RAF Wyton had a day of tragedy. Five members of the RAF lost their lives in two terrible crashes within an hour of each other. At 10 o'clock a two-seater trainer nosedived from the clouds into a field at Hilton, leaving the pilots practically unrecognisable. Wreckage was scattered over a large area. Then a Blenheim bomber was taxi-ing along the airfield when the engine failed and the machine toppled over and caught fire. The pilot was thrown out and killed but the observer and mechanic were trapped and burnt alive in the wreckage. 38 05 10 inquest 38 05 12

1938 05 27

Wyton Link Trainer aircraft simulator – pic – 38 05 27

1938 06 03

Wyton RAF station air day – description of planes – 38 06 03a

1938 06 18

Trainee pilot crashes at Marshall's aerodrome in Hawker Audax two-seater plane – 38 06 18

1938 06 29

Several towns in the Isle of Ely were 'raided' by bombers in the early hours. There was no cause for alarm, because the raid was nothing more than an experiment to test the effectiveness of air raid precautions. Two bombers from Marham left the aerodrome to spot the black-out area in Whittlesey, March, Chatteris & Wisbech. March and Chatteris were in complete darkness and it was an eerie sight to see the chain of lights representing the brickyards, being switched on and off during the flight. But some motorists would not comply with the requests of air wardens to dim their lights. 38 06 29

1938 08 04

Pilot parachutes from plane into beech tree at Thriplow, plane crashes Duxford 38 08 04

1938 08 05

Some 900 aircraft are taking part in an exercise testing the air defence of Great Britain. The attacking force will have 36 bomber squadrons (some from Bassingbourn and Wyton) while the defenders will consist of 23 fighter squadrons and 14 bomber squadrons, including planes from Duxford, Debden, Feltwell, Mildenhall and Stradishall. Anti-aircraft and searchlight batteries will be spread across the Eastern Counties. Bombers will fly without navigation lights unless other aircraft approach and

fighters are forbidden from attacking below 1,000 ft 38 08 05a. Plane crashes at Melbourn – 38 08 08. Mayor made tour of town, all in darkness apart from one or two lighted windows – 38 08 08b

1938 09 02

A ceremony, believed to be unique, took place at Duxford Aerodrome at the funeral of one of the young airman killed in a road crash near Abington cross-roads after special authority had to be obtained from the Air Ministry. Following a service in the RAF church on the aerodrome the ashes were carried in a special urn on a gun carriage draped with a Union Jack escorted by a bearer party of six airmen. The 'Last Post' was sounded before the ashes were committed to the air by the Commanding Officer. 38 09 02b

1938 10 06

Cambridge aerodrome has been in use for some months but the building operations have only recently been completely finished. The immense aeroplane hanger already houses over 20 machines and has room for more. The engine overhaul and repair shops are every well equipped and all the parachutes are stored, packed and aired. The airport hotel has lounge bar, dining rooms and kitchen with guest rooms on the second floor. I have seen a lot of aerodromes but this takes a lot of beating for its well planned layout 38 10 06

1938 10 07

Cambridge airfield was opened by Secretary of State for Air. There was no airport in Europe, with the possible exception of Berlin, which is so conveniently placed in relation to the town. D.G. Marshall recalled that in 1919 he purchased his first hangar from the Disposal Board and bought his first aeroplane. Some of his neighbours had told them to take their business elsewhere and now they had moved further out. The Flying School has been run in full understanding of University regulations; in most aerodromes the most profit-making department is the club bar, but there is not one here. 38 10 07b & c

1938 10 10

Spitfires first public appearance at opening Marshall's airport – 38 10 10a, b

1938 10 15

New Cambridge aerodrome opened – 38 10 15a

1938 10 19

Two RAF Wellesley bombers collide over Gt Dunmow – 38 10 19a

1938 11 01

Mid-air plane collision near Dunmow inquest – 38 11 01a, b

1938 12 21

RAF plane crashes in snowstorm near Milton Road railway crossing – picture – 38 12 21

1939-45

During the Second World War there was a very great deal of military aviation much of which was not reported in Cambridge newspapers because of censorship. Michael Bowyer has recorded much of this in his excellent book 'Air Raid!' published by Patrick Stephens in 1986 (ISBN 0-85059-685-8) I have included brief snippets relating to Cambridge in the chronology. Jack Overhill also reported many incidents in 'Cambridge at War: the diary of Jack Overhill 1939-1945 (CARS 2010) (ISBN 978-0-904323-21-4).

Crashed aircraft in Cambridge WWII – Bowyer – 58 01 25 & a

1939 02 10

Ralph Ernest Wright, a 19-year-old Ely pilot, set out in a Hawker Hind for his usual Sunday "flip" from No. 22 Training Centre of the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve at Marshall's on Sunday morning. Over

Ely he attracted attention with his stunting. Later more aerobatics thrilled the people of Chatteris. Then the plane dived from about 1,000 feet, straightened out and rose slightly at about 500 feet, then dived again, striking the ground with a sickening thud. The machine narrowly missed a house and buried its nose deeply into the grass turf, killing the pilot instantly. 39 02 10 CIPof 39 02 06

1939 03 01

Blenheim crash at Wyton inquest – 39 03 01c

1939 03 27

Marshall's airfield new hangars – 39 03 27

1939 03 30

The A.R.P. First Aid post at Auckland Road will be staffed by a doctor and trained nurse and give more extensive first-aid. Two practices have already taken place. A sham air raid was enacted last night with casualties brought in by ambulance and unloaded by stretcher bearers. Nurses and orderlies under the direction of Dr Walker, dealt with them. Realism was added by squibs which were let off and red paint was used to give the impression of real wounds. 39 03 30 & a

1939 04 11

The Cambridgeshire Regiment displayed its new mechanical vehicles on Parker's Piece on Easter Monday, attracting large crowds. There was a small tank, anti-tank rifle and a Bren gun mounted on a tripod which can be used as an anti-aircraft gun to keep invading aeroplanes at least 2,000 feet up. The Mayoress (Mrs A.A. Spalding) became so interested that she insisted on going through the motion of firing it without live ammunition 39 04 11a

1939 04 27

Progress is being made on the construction of the Cambridge Waterworks Company's new reinforced concrete service reservoir on Lime Kiln Road. With a capacity of two million gallons, it will double the available storage so that in the event of a breakdown at the pumping station the supply could be maintained for practically two days. Over 1,400 tons of concrete and 150 tons of steel will be used. When finished the banks and roof will be soiled and sown with grass seed to provide effective camouflage for something which would doubtless prove attractive to raiding aeroplanes 39 04 27a

1939 05 11

Air raid trenches would not protect people in event of air raid. Seven minutes would elapse after the warning before the planes were here. During that time head wardens had to get their wardens out of bed and they, in turn, had to get people out of their beds into the trenches. Under this scheme 30,000 people would be turned out into the darkened streets where there might be a lot of transport. Instead steel shelters should be provided, councillors were told. Cambridge was a safe place and trenches were practically no defence against aerial bombing. And they were narrow: young men will be touching knees with girls (Laughter) 39 05 11 & a

1939 05 19

An R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve pilot had a narrow escape at Marshall's Aerodrome. As he landed, his machine overturned, finishing up on its back. He ducked his head inside the cockpit, so escaping injury. The machine was badly damaged, but did not catch fire. 39 05 19 CIPof

1939 06 09

A young member of the R.A.F.V.R. at Marshall's Aerodrome received concussion and the sergeant with him slight injuries when their plane crashed at Lode on Saturday. The crash occurred during practice flying. It is understood the plane hit a tree. Sgt. Stearn is a son of the Rev. A. J. S. Stearn, Vicar of Swaffham Prior. 39 06 09 CIPof

1939 06 19

A barrage balloon was seen drifting in the vicinity of Saffron Walden during a heavy rainfall. At dawn it was discovered caught on the side of a tree between two fields at Mitchell's Farm. Only partly deflated, it extended to its full height and remained against the tree waving in the wind. When discovered it was quickly made fast by the ropes attached. The balloon had drifted 55 miles from Hook, Surrey, where it broke away during exercises 39 06 19

1939 07 28

Waterbeach Aerodrome - proposed acquiring by the Air Ministry of County Council land at Winfield Farm, Waterbeach, as an aerodrome. The Council had 20 tenants there. Two of them won cups for the best smallholdings this year; both lost legs in the war. The Committee wrote to MP and made a strong protest to the Air Ministry. They said there was nowhere else they could possibly go. 39 07 28 CIPof

1939 08 19

Blinded by the dazzling beam of a searchlight and unable to see his instrument panel, an RAF pilot leaped by parachute from his plane as it dived to the ground and burst into flames at Steeple Morden. Flying Officer Jeff, of Debden, was flying a Hawker Hurricane in formation with two other planes when he was caught by the searchlight. He dare not move out of the beam for fear of colliding with the other planes and, unable to see his panel, got into a spin. He jumped out and landed in a churchyard. The machine fell near a cottage, setting fire to some trees and killing several chickens. There were several small explosions as flames reached the ammunition. All that remained was a charred and tangled mass of metal strewn about an orchard 39 08 19a

1939 08 28

There are to be two anti-aircraft batteries and one anti-aircraft signalling unit based in Cambridge. Recruiting for the batteries opens at 45 Parkside and Salisbury Villas for the signalling unit. Cambridge has already responded to the call for National Service. The Cambridgeshire Regiment is over establishment, the Royal Engineers unit, 2nd General Hospital and the Cambridge National Defence Company are complete. A second Auxiliary Territorial Service (clerical) company for women will also be raised. 39 08 28

1939 09 01

An experimental gas mask drill was held for Ramsden Square children. Over 100 assembled and were instructed in the proper use of the gas masks by the senior warden, Mr E. Winkworth. They were told a whistle would sound in the event of an air raid, that the sound of a rattle would indicate a gas attack and a bell would sound when it was safe for them to come from their shelters. Aeroplanes roared overhead as the children were instructed 39 09 01b

1939 09 04

Cambridge had its first air raid warning in the early hours of the morning and hundreds of householders left their beds and adjourned to lower rooms. Others, however, slept through the noise of the sirens. One householder, doubtful about the efficiency of their black-out wrapped a woollen scarf round the electric light. Shortly afterwards they donned their gas masks after noticing a very pungent smell. Later they noticed it came from the scarf which had been charred through. The alarm was caused by the passing of unidentified aircraft over the Eastern Counties. Fighter aircraft went up to investigate 39 09 04

1939 07 14

An exercise demonstrated war-time black-out conditions in Cambridge. Streets lamps were turned out, speed limit signs extinguished and red hurricane lamps were placed on traffic islands. The external lights on police boxes were also put out and the bulbs removed as an additional precaution. Most vehicles drove slowly with only side and rear lights and cars using head-lights were stopped. Lights at the railway station were left on but carriage blinds on the 11.55 from London were drawn at Bishop's Stortford. The A.R.P. exercise envisaged that an incendiary bomb had fallen on the Tivoli

Cinema and no water was available from the hydrant. Within a few minutes a van-drawn Scammell pump pulled up outside. Firemen transported the pump to the riverside from which a hose was laid to a portable canvas dam near the burning building. There were four casualties – presumably usherettes, two suffering serious burns. Eighteen lorries were used as ambulances with an illuminated red cross on the front. 39 07 14, 14a

1939 08 04

Big Black-Out Test.—Cambridgeshire part of a gigantic black-out test. Twenty-five counties, in which the County and City of London will be included, will be in complete darkness—or as near to it as possible—on the night of August 9-10. More than half of England (from the Isle of Wight up to Lincolnshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire) will be included in the biggest black-out test ever attempted. In all places, except the London region, the test will start at midnight. Request that there shall not be any light to interfere what is aimed at—a 100 per cent, black-out. R.A.F. observers will be flying to report on the results of the great darkness, which is to approach as near to war conditions as possible. 39 08 04 CIPof

1939 08 25

Complete confidence in Cambridge preparations against air attack was experienced by Aid. W. L. Briggs (Chairman of the Cambridge A.R.P. Committee): "I feel that we shall be able, in case of emergency, to put up a thorough working skeleton organisation which we shall make every endeavour to enlarge as the necessity arises. With the volunteers that we have got we have worked persistently to put into operation all the necessary measures. But it must be realised that from the first we have been, from the Government point of view, a non-vulnerable area, and this has restricted us very much in making the preparations which we think are necessary, but every section has persistently and thoroughly worked out the details of their duties. First aid is trained and equipped as far as possible." With regard to the evacuation scheme", Aid. Briggs added: "Everything has been worked out to the fullest detail, both with regard to reception, billeting, feeding and medical attention" 39 08 25 CIPof

1939 09 25

There was only a remote possibility of villages being bombed but mobile units had been fitted up to deal with casualties and there was a first-aid point in every village. It was not practical to provide air raid sirens but a parish could provide one if the Chief Constable approved. Warnings would be given every time a hostile aircraft crossed the coast between King's Lynn and the Thames. If you are in bed at night and the warning comes, you should stop in bed. If it comes in the day, you should go to bed, people were told. 39 09 25

1939 10 21

The Cambridge School of Flying started in 1916 and was open to those applying for commissions in the Royal Flying Corps for training as air pilots. A field was rented from Mr Lilley, a farmer in the old world village of Harston. Soon afterwards only cadets entering the R.F.C. were admitted. After the serious side was finished for the day it was natural that young men of high spirits should have an occasional 'rag'. They removed the sign from the village pub and fixed it to the gate of the church. An investigating policeman found his bicycle missing; it was found in the branches of the highest tree. The villagers were very tolerant and forgiving, friendships were formed and some found life's partners in this romantic old village. 39 10 21b & c & d

1939 10 27

Hitler's bombs will have no effect on the air raid shelter in the basement of Herbert Robinson's garage in Regent Street which is not only the largest in Cambridge but impregnable even from a direct hit. It has three steel reinforced floors above the actual basement which comprise the shelter. Experts say that even if the first or second floors were damaged by a direct hit from a bomb, people sheltered would still be immune. It comprises 6,000 square feet and has accommodation for over 700 people. 39 10 27a

1939 12 01

A Clare College undergraduate told the Conscientious Objectors' Tribunal that he hoped to do psychological work. The idea had come into his head while working in a Basque children's camp when he noticed that many of them had a kind of fit at the sound of an aeroplane. He was registered on condition he continued his studies. A shop assistant from Hinton Avenue, who was a lay reader in the Methodist Church, was registered on condition he undertook agricultural work. A man from Fulbrooke Road objected on religious grounds; he was a research physicist at the Cavendish Laboratory while a King's College graduate appealed on moral grounds. He was prepared and anxious to perform non-combatant service. 39 12 01d & e

1940 01 27

Earl Sandwich, Lord Lieutenant of Huntingdonshire, son killed flying – 40 01 27b

1940 01 31

East Anglian day raiders – 40 01 31a

1940 02 02

Killed While Flying.—The Hon. Wm. Drogo Sturges Montagu, the younger son of the Earl of Sandwich, Lord Lieutenant of Huntingdonshire, was killed while flying on Friday. He was 32. The other occupant of the plane, Pilot Officer G. S. Taylor, was also killed. Mr. Montagu originally followed the career of the First Earl of Sandwich in the Royal Navy, but only left this service to take up aviation as a hobby. Simple but impressive was the service at St. Mary's Church, Brampton, on Tuesday afternoon, when the funeral took place. The Ven. Archdeacon Knowles, assisted by the Rector of Brampton (the Rev. W. A. Uthwatt) conducted the service, which was fully choral. The deceased officer was accorded military honours, the coffin, covered with the Union Jack being borne by six R.A.F. sergeants. Pilot officers acted as pall barers, and others followed as it was carried from the church. Outside stood a large escort of airmen with reversed arms. After the service the body was taken to Cambridge for cremation, and later the ashes will be placed in the family vault at Brampton.

1940 02 09

House Wall Collapses. When a Cambs. soldier due from France on leave returns to his home, he will find it looking as though it had been bombed; An end wall of the house, which is situated in Tunwell's Lane, Great Shelford, collapsed on Wednesday as if torn off by high explosive, leaving two rooms exposed to view. Fortunately no one was inside at the time, though had the occupant, Mr. Thomas Roslyn, arrived on leave as expected, he and his wife might both have been there. As it was, Mrs. Roslyn went to the house to air it, but when her husband did not turn up she went to her mother's home in Stonehall Road, Shelford. The collapse occurred about 8.30 p.m., and the house looked like a doll's house with the end off. The furniture in the two rooms visible was undisturbed; a wardrobe in the bedroom could be seen standing within a few inches of the place where the wall had been.

1940 06 19

Vicarage Terrace bombed, night of 18/19th, 10 killed. (Bowyer pp51-3)

Twelve killed in big raids on England – headlines – 40 06 19, a, c Last night's raid: casualties in Vicarage Terrace Cambridge; Chesterton housewives with stirrup pump – 40 06 19e, f, g, h, i Wreckage, Vicarage Terrace – photo – 40 06 20a.

Nine die in raid. Nine people were killed when bombs hit a row of cottages in a working class district of a town in Cambridgeshire during Tuesday night's air raid over East Anglia. [Vicarage Terrace, Cambridge] A baby girl aged five months was killed in her cradle. The mother and father were rescued from the wreckage. A mother, father and baby boy of two were killed in another of the cottages. A boy of six died in hospital. The list of casualties as reported in the CDN June 19, 1940: killed: Heather Dear, aged 5 months; William Langley and 'Sam' Langley; Gladys Clarke, 11; Mr & Mrs Beresford and their son Michael, aged two years; Molly Palmer, 9 and Leonard Palmer, 6. Injured: Mrs Daisy Kate Clarke, 42, shock; Charles F. Clarke, 53, fracture of the leg; Peggy Clarke, 15, multiple abrasions; Mrs Kathleen Dear, 22, shock; Sidney . Palmer, 54, cut head; Mrs Emma

Palmer, 51, multiple injuries; Lily Itzcovitch, 11, an evacuee, cut head and arm; Mrs Mabel Watts, multiple injuries; Mrs Doris Palmer, 34, injuries to the feet; Mrs Lily Langley, 47 shock. 40 06 21 Vicarage Terrace bombing – experiences of CDN reporter who suspected of being German paratrooper as was wearing red and grey under his greatcoat – his pyjamas. Was not the first – the first bombs on mainland fell near Canterbury on May 9th; May 24th Middlesbrough was first industrial town – 46 06 23b

1940 06 19

Nazi airmen descended by parachute after Heinkel destroyed by fighter watched by Cambs people – 40 06 19b

1940 06 21

Shot down in Cambs – German plane – photo – 40 06 21a

1940 06 21

Shot Down Eight Aircraft. In the list of R.A.F. awards published on Saturday appeared the name of Flight Lt. Nicholas Gresham Cooke son of the late Mr Arthur Cooke and of Coun. Mrs. Cooke. He receives the Distinguished Flying Cross. The official notice stated: "This officer, acting as flight leader, was responsible for shooting down eight enemy aircraft during two patrols". Mr. Cooke, who has held a commission in the Royal Air Force for the past five years, is now reported missing. He was educated at Marlborough and Trinity College, Cambridge and represented the University in sailing. With Mr. Peter E Scott, he represented England in 1934 in sailing against Canada. In 1938 he represented the R.A.F. in bob sleighing.

1940 06 28

Awarded D.F.C.—Acting Flight Lt. J. W. C. Simpson. R.A.F., a native of Ramsey St. Mary, has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. While leading a section over Northern France, he met a superior enemy force and destroyed three aircraft. In all he has accounted for seven.

1940 07 12

D.S.C. for Isleham Man.—Sub-Lt. Philip Donald Julian Sparke, R.N. (Fleet Air Arm), son of Donald Sparke, R.A.F. and grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Sparke, Isleham, has been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery. Sub.-Lt. Sparke was one of the survivors of H.M.S. Courageous in the early part of the war.

1940 08 16

Local Man's Achievement. On Sunday Flight Sergeant Donald Kingaby, son of the Rev. E. P. Kingaby (Vicar of Impington) brought down one German aeroplane and damaged another, and on Monday he followed up his successes by bringing down two more enemy planes.

1940 08 25

Germans bomb Unicam instrument works Arbury Rd where sights and periscopes for submarines were assembled. This raid, the first of several, consisted of an incendiary shower which fell on nearby farmland, damaging a cow shed. (Bowyer p75)

Around 02:20 a second Heinkel 111 dropped at least four 50 kgs over a wide area. Firstly, a bomb exploded in a meadow at Manor Farm, Arbury Road, Cambridge, killing one of Alice Cardinal's cows and damaging a stable and ten house exteriors. A UXHE rested in a field farmed by Bill Downham, and two bombs damaged eight houses in Leys Avenue. A second set of bombs from a third He 111 crossed the railway installations on the south side of Hills Road Bridge, Cambridge, the first exploding in Pemberton Terrace, the next on Foster's Farm in Shaftesbury Avenue, one on Purbeck Road playing fields and two in Homerton College grounds. Damage was slight. (Bowyer p75)

1940 08 28

Last night's raids, six high explosives in a south-east town, one behind a hedge, part of roof dislodged; crater 10 feet wide – 40 08 26b; photos [Pemberton Terrace] High explosives and incendiary bombs [Cherry Hinton]– 40 08 29a

1940 08 26

Every day, at dawn and dusk, two Lysanders left Cambridge Airport, their crews scanning the East Anglian coast for signs of an enemy's landing. These 'Lyssies', dispersed on the corner of the airfield nearest to Cherry Hinton and by Teversham Lane, showed signs of a battering in France. They were tempting targets and, at 23:50 on 28 August, they came under attack. Over 100 incendiaries were scattered across Cherry Hinton by a Ju 88 and three 50 kg HEs cratered a Coldham's Lane field near 16 Squadron's Lysanders. Four more HEs did little damage to the Norman Cement Works, and another bomb exploded at Shelford Bottom. (Bowyer p79)

1940 08 30

Dornier Down. A Dornier 215 was brought down by anti-aircraft gunners in Cambridgeshire shortly before midnight on Friday. The three-inch guns damaged the bomber just sufficiently to force the German pilot to land. All five of the crew were taken prisoner. This was one of the four aircraft which the Nazis lost on Friday. A Junkers 88 was brought down on the north-east coast by Lewis gunners, and two other enemy planes were shot down by British fighters 40 08 30 CIPof

1940 09 13

Daniel Dunsden, a platelayer of Mill Road was killed when a barrage balloon drifted over Cambridge. He was near the railway between Mill Road and Coldham's Lane bridge when he was caught by a steel cable trailing from the balloon. He was carried for a distance of over 30 yards and then dropped, sustaining fatal injuries. Before the accident the balloon had passed over the town at a considerable height. In the Mill Road area it came lower, and the cable threw a wireless pole through the roof of a house in Mill Road. The interior of the house was not damaged and nobody was injured in this incident. The balloon then gained height and drifted in the direction of Teversham. At Teversham Hall an old chimney stack on a scullery was struck by the cable. A piece of the cable was snapped off and the balloon at once shot up into the air and continued in an easterly direction. Telephone wires were damaged and the electricity supply for a village was affected for a time 40 09 13a, 40 09 17a

1940 09 17/18

An air raid alert sounded in Cambridge at 03:40, and within a quarter of an hour two oil bombs had fired crops next to Cherry Hinton Hall, fairly close to the aerodrome. All then quietened on this very clear night, and well I recall my mother and I helping older residents living near us, and who regularly took shelter, back to their homes when, without any warning, there came a tremendous explosion. A high-flying Ju 88 which had approached Cambridge from the south was now scampering away. Obviously its target was Cambridge railway installations, and again the bombs had fallen wide. The first made a crater 8 ft across by 4 ft deep just inside Fenner's Cricket Ground and demolished a wall by Mortimer Road. The blast effect was incredible, and mainly caused, I reckoned at the time, by a second bomb on the University Tennis Courts 20 yards from Gresham Road and a third which exploded in the garden of No 49, Hills Road, close to the line dividing it from Lyndewode Road. Despite their brown sticky paper protection, thousands of windows were smashed and slates in profusion shaken or blown from roofs over an amazingly wide area particularly from houses in Mortimer Road, Willis Road, Mill Road, Gresham Road, Glisson Road, Mawson Road, Regent Street, Harvey Road, St Paul's Road, Lyndewode Road and Tenison Road where, at No 27, an oil bomb landed appropriately in a coal place, starting a fire which was rapidly extinguished. Two further bombs had fallen at Cherry Hinton Hall, causing blast damage to greenhouses. The hall was private property, and it was some time before the craters were located. Their size caused astonishment for one was 50 ft across and 8 ft deep, in the centre of which, to the amazement of its discoverers, was a most splendid crop of mushrooms enjoying new-found fertility. (Bowyer p93) – photo – 40 09 27

1940 09 20

Junkers 88 crashed near Cambridge after being engaged by RAF fighters; four occupants taken into custody – 40 09 20a.

1940 09 26

Marshall sends cheque for Tiger Moth to Minister of Aircraft Production – 40 09 26a

1940 09 27

Fenners bombed – photos – 40 09 27

1940 10 02

A.C. Taylor helped raise Anti-Aircraft battery of Cambridge men. They had to bring down bandits, protect vital spots and force raiders to high altitude. People grumbled because warnings were not sounded but sounding them three or four times a night would upset morale. When they have solo machines floating about trying to put the wind up he is glad sirens are not sounded. – 40 10 02b

1940 10 04

Killed in Air Fight, — Pilot Officer Frederick Harrold, only son of Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Harrold, of 38, Hills Road, Cambridge, is reported killed in action during air fighting on Saturday. Educated at the County School, he was employed at the University Library until a year before war broke out, when he joined the R.A.F. on a short service commission. He was a well-known member of the Cambridge Town Rowing Club.

1940 10 08

Futile Nazi bombs in East Anglia – photos of mound and crater with wardens, bomb by roadside and pieces found in area – 40 10 08a

1940 10 14

Church at Heydon hit by bomb – fell on tower; service had been held that evening. Another village received several bombs – 40 10 14a

1940 10 15

High explosive bomb dropped in front garden of house at 19 Barrow Road, half house collapsed & caught fire, Mr Crowson killed; no.17 had to be demolished [5.3,7.16 Bowyer p100] Barrow Road bombings – photos – 40 10 16a, b. Oil bomb NE borough boundary (Bowyer p101)

1940 10 18

Church hit by bomb. — Bombs were again dropped on various parts of East Anglia, but the most serious damage appears to have been to a village church. In the area four high explosive bombs were dropped, but no casualties have so far been reported. At the church, the bomb fell on the tower and continued into the churchyard. Chancel, choir stalls, organ and pulpit were all undamaged, and all the stained glass, which was covered with thick brown paper, was unbroken. The church holds about 250 people and a service had been held there in the evening. Recently £200 was spent on renovation to the fabric and the bells. Another village a few miles away also received several bombs, but no information has been received of serious damage or casualties and some of the bombs are known to have fallen in open fields 40 10 18 CIPof

1940 10 21

Strafing station (Bowyer p103)

1940 11 01

Nazis Surrender to Woman. When a Junkers 88 bomber was shot down: at Stuntney two occupants, aged about 18 to 20, threw down their revolvers and gave themselves up to a woman, who was the first person on the scene. The two other members of the crew, who had baled out by parachute, were captured in Soham Fen and taken to Newmarket. The machine had been badly damaged by R.A.F.

fighters and was finished off by another fighter. The Nazi pilot crashed on Mr. Owen Ambrose's farm at Quanea Fen. Mr. Ambrose told a reporter "The plane touched down in a ploughed field, jumped a ditch and came to rest in a beet field. The first person on the scene was Mrs. Ashman, who lives at the farm. As she approached the two men, they emptied their revolvers and threw them away. Other men from the farm came up and the Germans were driven away in a lorry by Mr. Brooks." The two who baled out were uninjured 40 11 01 CIPof

1940 11 04

Salvo of bombs dropped on an East Anglian town, damaged mission church – 40 11 04a

1940 11 08

An enemy plane dropped a high explosive bomb in a field shortly after midnight on Friday. Fortunately the only damage done was to the windows of several houses. Two semi-detached houses had the front window frames completely blown out and another house was also damaged. A woman and daughter, the tenants, were in bed and a clock on a chair was lifted on to the bed and struck the woman. All the pans and crockery in the scullery were thrown to the floor and broken and the back door to the kitchen was lifted from its hinges. There were no casualties. Several other houses in the villages some distance away had windows broken

Futile Nazi bombs in East Anglia – photos of crater in field – 40 10 08a

1940 11 08

Messerschmitt on View. — A German Messerschmitt 108 arrived at Royston on Tuesday and was on view at a nominal charge in aid of the local Spitfire Fund. The machine was brought down in England some time ago. It was in charge of a local committee, and placed at the rear of the Town Hall. A substantial sum was paid by onlookers.

1940 11 20

Cottage hit by bombs – photos – 40 11 20a

1940 11 21

Bombs demolish upper part village house – 40 11 21a. Bombs on Land Settlement Estate blow in doors – 40 11 21b

1940 11 22

Bombs damage houses and shops; field and fen – 40 11 22a

1940 11 23

Nazi that was Messerschmitt-en – Corn Exchange war weapons exhibition – Messerschmitt shot down in county 40 11 23b, 40 11 26b,c

1940 11 29

Awarded Bar to D.F.M.—A bar to the D.F.M. has been awarded to Sgt. Ernest William Gimson, of No. 107 Squadron, R.A.F. Gimson was born at Sawston, but his home is at Babakin, Western Australia. Before joining the R.A.F., he was a storekeeper's assistant. He was awarded his D.F.M. for gallantry in air operations. Sgt. Ernest Gimson attended the Linton schools for a number of years before he emigrated with his parents to Australia. His lively interest in the village has always been maintained as he had a number of pen friends with whom he corresponded regularly. His father, Mr. E. R. Gimson, served in the Great War, 1914-18, and afterwards during his service with Messrs. R. Holtum & Sons, took a very active interest in the Linton branch of the British Legion before leaving for Australia.

1940 12 06

D.F.M. for Cambs. Man. The D.F.M. has been awarded Sergt Donald Ernest Kingaby, only son of the Rev. P. F. Kingaby, Vicar of Impington, and Mrs. Kingaby. Sergt. Kingaby, a member of 92 Squadron, R.A.F., has displayed great courage and tenacity in his attacks against the enemy, and it is

officially stated that he has destroyed at least nine enemy machines, four of which he shot down in one day. On one occasion his plane caught fire over the sea, and he baled out at 10,000ft falling into a field near Whitstable. On another occasion he crashed on landing at another place in Kent, but was uninjured.

1940 12 14

East Anglian church damaged bomb – 40 12 14a

1941 01 16

It was at 03:55 on the 16th that a very low flier... placed a container of incendiaries over the Hyde Park Corner area of Cambridge. About 250 bombs rained down, several slithering across the southern part of the Catholic Church roof, slightly damaging it. Others clattered on to Flinders store, which was soon engulfed by a major fire. Most of the bombs, though, burst on the Perse Boys' School Hall ... which burnt fiercely, the whole impossible to save. As the fire brigade arrived the Ju 88 made a second, north-south strafing run, its gunners firing into both blazing buildings. The Perse School Hall was still burning furiously at 08:30. Despite the devastation, and the multitude of hoses necessary because, due to the icy conditions, water had to be widely tapped, buses were still passing close to the huge fire. Sitting atop a double-decker I watched as much of the hall roof, or its remains, suddenly collapsed into remnants of the familiar form and erupted into a tremendous burst of flame, the blaze showering sparks widely. Presumably the target had been Cambridge station (Bowyer p134)

41 01 16a,b,c

Perse school fire destroyed roofs of six classrooms and the library and three-quarters of the roof of the hall. – 41 02 20b

1941 01 18

Creeping in from Ely at low level during the dull, dreary Thursday afternoon, [a plane] dropped nine 50 kg HEs at 15:57 straddling Mill Road Bridge. Bombs burst in the Corporation store yard, and No 130 Mill Road and the next house were shattered by a direct hit. Other bombs exploded in the rail yard. Two civilians were killed and ten injured, for the bridge was being used by many pedestrians and cyclists at the time. (Bowyer p137) [6.2, 8.1, 8.7]

East Anglian Town Bombed. Three people are feared to have been killed and four others received head injuries when a German raider dropped several high explosive bombs on an East Anglian town yesterday afternoon. The plane dived low before releasing the bombs, said an eyewitness. One bomb fell on a row of small houses, demolishing two, and some of the casualties were people in these premises. 41 01 31 CIPof

Bombs next door ... Mill Road bombing – 41 01 31b

1941 02 12

RAF bomber crashes on top houses in Histon Road, three aged women killed – Miss Catharine Allen, Mrs Ann Warland, Mrs Ada Sara Blackwell. A fourth, Mrs Mary Hewitt, taken to hospital. The plane caught the top of the houses, completely wrecking the top storey of the village, Afterwards it came to rest on a tennis court at the back of the houses. The crew were uninjured – 41 02 12a photo 41 02 13a. inquest details – 41 02 14a

1941 02 15

A pair of large semi-detached houses, Nos 341/343 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge. First to explode was an H E, immediately in front of the two houses whose frontal sections it tore away. Eight occupants escaped without injury. Another crater was soon discovered on waste ground by Perne Road, while more evident had been incendiaries burning on fields stretching between Queen Edith's Way and Lime Kiln Road. More investigation revealed a burnt-out oil bomb, six complete containers of unignited incendiaries and parts of three other containers along with 58 unignited bombs. Since no enemy aircraft was known to have been in the area at the time, no warning had been sounded to accompany Cambridge's quietest raid of the war. (Bowyer p144)

Raider's night bomb demolishes house front; 10 people escaped when high explosive bomb fell a few feet from house – 41 02 17a Photo damage to house, front blown out – 41 02 18b

1941 02 19

Lone raider bombs busy street; market day casualties (Newmarket) – 41 02 19a

1941 02 21

Ten people, including two young babies, had a remarkable escape from injury in an East Anglian town on Saturday night, when a high explosive bomb fell only a few feet from the front wall of the house in which they were staying. The whole of the front of the building was affected, but Mr. and Mrs. Coles, who were in the front bedroom, were unhurt. The other occupants of the houses, which are semi-detached, were Mr. and Mrs. Lewis and their two-year-old baby, Mrs. Mapey, Mrs. Andrews and Mr. and Mrs. Honeywell and their two-year-old baby 41 02 21 CIPof

1941 02 21

Another Swavesey D. F. C. Flying Officer Eric C. Barwell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Barwell, the Old House, Swavesey, has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. After flying with the Cambridge Volunteer Reserve for a year, he was mobilised on the outbreak of war, and in December, 1939, he was granted a commission as pilot officer. He is a brother of Wing Cdr. Philip Barwell, who was awarded the D.F.C. in December, 1939

1941 02 28

Ten Die in Raid. — Ten people are known to have been killed and a number of others injured when a fairly concentrated attack was made on an East Anglian town (Cambridge) on Monday night. Six of the dead are women and four men. Three of the injured are stated to be in a serious condition. The fatal casualties included an elderly air raid warden, Mrs. Charles Gent and several other fire watchers who were standing in the road outside a hotel. Sapper Day and Mr. Brittain were among the other victims. Hundreds of incendiary bombs and a considerable number of high explosives were dropped by the raiders, which flew over very low at intervals. Many flares could be seen in the sky around the outlying parts of the town and British fighters were heard overhead. The main brunt of the damage was borne by business and commercial premises in one street, where for some distance along both sides of the road (Hills Road) shops were demolished or damaged. Hardly a pane of glass intact in this district and several houses in side streets nearby suffered broken windows. It was in this area that two of the other fatal casualties, Mr. A. Negus and Mrs. Robertson, occurred. An eyewitness said next morning that during the raid a German plane appeared to fly over the road dropping incendiaries and was followed a few minutes later by another machine, which dropped high explosives. It was these which caused a large number of casualties. In another district a single high explosive bomb landed directly on a house, killing the Misses Barker, who were in the building at the time. Neighbours were also injured, but not seriously. The three others to lose their lives were Miss Thaxter, Mrs. Woodcock and Mr. Ashman. 41 02 28 CIPof, 41 02 25 a,b,c

11 die in air attack, Cherry Hinton Rd, Hills Rd, Cambridge Place, St Paul's church, Histon Rd, 2 die at Grantchester Meadows, [1.5,6.3]

1941 02 12

RAF bomber crashes on top houses in Histon Road, three aged women killed – Miss Catharine Allen, Mrs Ann Warland, Mrs Ada Sara Blackwell. A fourth, Mrs Mary Hewitt, taken to hospital. The plane caught the top of the houses, completely wrecking the top storey of the village, Afterwards it came to rest on a tennis court at the back of the houses. The crew were uninjured – 41 02 12a photo 41 02 13a. Inquest details – 41 02 14a

1941 03 21

Flying Accident. Corporal Jack F. W. Dunn has been killed in a flying accident while on active service. He was the youngest son of the late Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Dunn, of 52, New Street, Cambridge. Jack was an old Central School boy and on leaving school he worked at Messrs. Herbert Robinson's, Mill Road, and then at Messrs. A. Macintosh and Sons until he joined the R.A.F. about six years ago. Before joining the R.A.F., he was in the local Territorials, and was a keen machine gunner. He was very keen on boxing and belonged to Billy Pitt's old school

1941 03 28

Extensive damage was done by a fire which broke out in the north wing of Pembroke College in the early hours of Saturday. The fire is believed to have started in one of the bedrooms of an upper storey, and the flames quickly spread along the whole length of the block under the roof. A fire-watcher raised the alarm, and regular and auxiliary firemen were soon on the scene with several trailer pumps, in addition to the three regular engines. Fire squads from the laboratories across the road and the college fire squad also assisted in fighting the flames. They had secured such a hold, however, that it was two hours before they could be brought under control. Most of the damage due to the flames was in the roof and upper part of the block, but the thousands of gallons of water poured on the fire soaked through to the lower rooms. Many of the occupants of the block were roused from their beds when the seriousness of the outbreak was discovered, and some of them assisted in removing furniture to the court. The treasurer of the college (Mr. J. T. Spittle) said: "It is impossible yet to estimate the damage, as we cannot get into some of the rooms. The damage, however, is extensive 41 03 28 CIPof. [This was caused not by enemy action but by an airman billeted in the College dropping a lighted cigarette]

1941 04 01

'Cambridgeshire' fighter plane funded by Lord Fairhaven – photo – 41 04 01

1941 04 14

Bombs Chivers, probably aimed Unicam (Bowyer p174)

1941 05 02

D.F.M. It has been officially announced that Sergt, Pilot A. F. Wiles, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wiles, of 85 Sedgwick Street, Cambridge, has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal. Sergt Wiles, who has been employed by the L.N.E.R. has been in the R.A.F. for the last ten years, and has gained high distinction in boxing circles, he is the holder of the Middle East Command championship, and has many cups and medals to his credit.

1941 05 09

Fire bomb damage on East Anglian town – thousands of incendiaries and high explosives (Coldham's Lane, Marshall Road area) – 41 05 09

Heinkels were responsible for dropping incendiaries and four HEs in Railway Street and Coldham's Lane, Cherry Hinton and at 01:50 delivered a very sharp incendiaries-only attack over much of southern Cambridge ... Showered over the Coleridge Ward-Hills Road area roughly in the triangle between Hills Road Bridge-Mowbray Road-Worts Causeway, with spillovers on to Brooklands Avenue and Newton Road, the bombs started fires in fifty houses, but most were quickly subdued ... Bombs were burning brilliantly on Mowbray Road, on the pavements and in the houses. Despite their quantity, most of the incendiaries were soon extinguished. Holes in the roofs of houses in Blinco Grove marked entry points. Others burnt themselves out in Morley Memorial School playground, but at Nos 8 and 10 Cavendish Avenue, and 224 and 226 Hills Road, fires were serious enough to warrant visits by the fire service even though damage was limited. The worst was at Homerton College where a number of bombs in the high roof of the main hall quickly set fire to many timbers. By the time the NFS arrived much of the roof was burning, and had later to be rebuilt. (Bowyer p180)

1941 07 04

W.S. Farren, born Cambridge and educated Perse School & Trinity appointed director of Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough – 41 07 04

1941 07 26

Cambridge man had wireless set taken from German plane hidden in clothing in his wardrobe – 41 07 26– trial – 41 08 09

1941 08 03

At 18:05 Cambridge sirens sounded and moments later, a Heinkel He 111 emerged from the mist over Chesterton. It promptly banked towards the north, opening fire on the Arbury Road searchlight site which answered with LMG fire. (Bowyer p246)

1941 08 07

A precision attack on the Unicom Works, a small factory in Arbury Road (which specialized in optical equipment for guns and submarines. The raid opened with the launch of single-candle flares, then came Dorniers from the north-west dropping at 01:05 about 360 incendiaries, initially very close to the target, over Leys Road, Orchard Avenue, Arbury Road and College land adjacent, then more in Histon where a timber yard was set ablaze. They returned, bombing nearer the target, another incendiary load igniting within the area between Shirley School-Scotland Road and Kendal Way. A third shoal of incendiaries ignited in Chesterton Road ... Four 50 kg HEs exploded in the Stourbridge Common/Garlic Row area injuring an ARP warden, before the final incendiary shower guided by the markers was scattered just to the east of Barnwell Bridge, on Newmarket Road, Ditton Walk and Ditton Fields. Among this load were a few explosive incendiaries. When the raid ended at 01:55 a count showed 114 Cambridge properties with fire or blast damage, but only two houses untenable. Eight ABB500 containers were found. (Bowyer p246) [6.21,1.7, 6.5]

1951 08 20

Fire bombs fall on housing estate in East Anglian town last night; tackled by wardens and no damage – 41 08 20

1941 08 22

Won D.F.M. Sergeant Samuel Sargent has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal for taking over the controls after his pilot was wounded and flying the aircraft back to base. In April last Sgt. Sargent married Miss Patricia Wright, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. T. Wright, of Lynton House. Cambridge Street, Godmanchester.

1941 08 29

Sturton Street bombing; old lady and little boy killed, Sunday School destroyed – photos – 41 08 29
An old lady and a four-year-old boy lost their lives when high explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped on an East Anglian town last week. A Sunday School was destroyed and a chapel and private houses were considerably damaged. The dead are Mrs. Louisa Rowell, aged 82, and John Gilbert Bowles, aged four, both of whom were sleeping in the same house. Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Bowles, parents of John Bowles, were injured and have been detained in hospital. A high explosive bomb which fell outside the chapel caused damage to the interior, but incendiaries which were dropped were promptly tackled by A.R.P. personnel and neighbours and overcome before they could gain a hold. 41 09 05 CIPof

Among the few air-raids Cambridge suffered was the one a night in August 1941 which besides damaging a number of houses in Romsey town, completely demolished an old building which was used as a primary Sunday school by Mill Road Baptists. A handsome hall is now being built and is expected to be opened in the autumn c49 05 20 [2.1, 2.2]

Argyle St, Sturton street chapel bombed (replaced 1954), A bomb dropped within a few feet of the west wall, removing the greater part of the roof slating, opening a large hole in the external vaulting and causing severe damage to the fabric. The whole of the roof lifted and many of the roof timbers were fractured. The building was of no use for public worship which had to take place in the Assembly Hall c53 11 18

1941 09 27

Plane crashes garden Bene't Place, pilot killed – photos - 41 09 27 “A Hurricane had crashed in an alley between two houses in Lensfield Road, knocking part of a wall down ... the ammunition exploded” (Overhill p128)

1941 09 29

Incendiary & high explosive bombs on East Anglian town, several houses damaged; fire guards at work, repairs in hand; small preparatory school had bomb in basement, nursery school also damaged; Mrs Rootham had fortunate escape, found accommodation with Mr Reddaway – 41 09 29a

1941 10 21

Worker damaged aircraft with hammer – sabotage – 41 10 21a

1941 10 30

Rumours that high Nazi official had parachuted into Cambs denied; one of our bombers returning from Germany found itself in difficulties and two crew bailed out; Home Guard called out – 41 10 30a

1941 12 09

P.c.'s Heroism. "Although warned of the danger of unexploded bombs, P.c. Haynes persisted: in going to the aircraft, where he did splendid rescue work, which resulted in the saving of valuable lives." These words are contained in a commendation by the Royal Air Force of P.c. Albert Haynes, of the Cambridge Division, for gallant conduct and exemplary behaviour when a British aircraft crashed and caught fire. His heroism was reported by the County Chief Constable (Mr. W. H. Edwards) at Saturday's meeting of the Standing Joint Committee, and it was added that the commendation had been promulgated to all members of the Force and "recorded in the constable's personal record. The Chairman (Mr. W. C. Jackson) said the highest commendation was due to P.c. Haynes for his courageous attitude in saving the lives of several airmen.

1942 01 06

Newmarket man won DSO when flew burning aircraft for three hours – 42 01 06

1942 02 13

Histon's Treble D.F.M, Married, Histon, in spirit, was much in evidence at Bromley, Kent, on Saturday when the marriage of its most noted hero took place, Pilot Officer Donald Kingsby, of Beaucourt, Park Lane, Histon, being married to Miss Helen Watkinson, of Stanley Road, Bromley, The ceremony took place at St. John's Church, Bromley. Pilot, Officer Kingsby has won the Distinguished Flying Medal with two bars (a triple winner)

1942 04 03

Daring Rescue. The British Empire Medal (civil division) has been conferred on Mr Frederick Bertram Pearson farmer, of Westwick Hall Farm, Oakington, for the courage and determination he showed in saving the lives of two airmen when their machine crashed and caught fire. The plane, which was "bombed up", narrowly missed Mr Pearson's house, crashed through his garden and landed in an adjoining field, where it burst into flames. Rushing to the spot Mr. Pearson found one man trying to pull another more seriously injured from the burning wreck. With great coolness, Mr. Pearson cut of the harness of the badly injured man and carried him clear of the flames on his back, giving a hand to the other man at the same time. While he was doing this the heat was discharging bullets and the bombs were liable to explode. Two horticultural workers from Oakington, Wilfrid Josiah Brickwood and Edward Jabez Smith, have also received commendations for their share in the rescue. 42 04 03 CIPof

1942 04 13

Girls as plane-spotters with Royal Observer Corps – first in area – 42 04 13b

1942 05 15

"Invasion" Test.—Cambridge is to be the centre of an important "invasion" exercise this weekend. The public, however, unlike the recent exercise at Plymouth—are not to take a direct part in the exercise, which will last from 8.30p.m. on Saturday to 11 a.m. on Sunday. The "picture" of the exercise is that invasion by the enemy is presumed to have started and that enemy forces are

approaching Cambridge. Such an attack would carry heavy air raids on Cambridge itself. Military and Home Guards are taking part in attack and defence, and members of the Civil Defence Services in Cambridge and Cambridgeshire will be actively participating. The public are warned that in the course of the night there will probably be "unusual sounds," with "bombing," and planes may be used.

1942 05 15

Bombs on village.—Bombs were dropped on an East Anglian village on Tuesday night. They caused no damage, however, except to fowls, and most of the damage was confined to poultry houses. It is thought that only one raider was concerned.

1942 07 10

David Gregory Marshall killed while riding, founded flying school and motor company; bought first plane at end war and erected hangar; founded Flying School in 1929 and built airfield 1938 – 42 07 10a

1942 07 10

Tests of the first jet-powered fighter were conducted at Newmarket Heath where on 10th July 1942 taxiing trial were held and two attempted take-offs made. It was then abandoned until more powerful engines became available. The first flight from the Heath took place in April 1943 but due to the bumpy surface fuel loads had to be kept to a minimum CDN 16.7.1954

1942 07 17

Group Captain Barwell Dead. — On the day after his 36th birthday. Group Captain Philip Reginald Barwell D.F.C. has been killed during an operational flight over the South Coast. A Swavesey man, Group Captain Barwell was, at the time of his appointment, the youngest of his rank in the R.A.F. Educated at Wellingborough, where he captained the Bisley eight, he obtained a short service commission in 1925. It was seven years later that his permanent commission was granted. As a fighter-pilot commanding his Squadron, he was awarded his D.F.C., and it is interesting to recall that the operational section which he commanded at the time of his death had more enemy machines to its credit than any other in Fighter Command. On June 22 this year he stood godfather to the daughter of his youngest brother, Squadron Leader E. G. Barwell. D-F.C. at Boxworth Church

1942 07 27

Flying incredibly low, a Ju 88A-5 released twelve bombs along the east side of Bridge Street. ... Rapidly the sky reflected a fierce fire, and next morning's discoveries were equally memorable. Gone first had been the 'Blue Barn' Restaurant, an aged two-storey building in Ram Yard removed by a 250 kg HE, another of which scored a direct hit on the repair shop of Allins' Garage at 5 Jordan's Yard, causing the collapse of adjoining houses. At the Bridge Street/ Jesus Lane junction a 50kg H E smashed its way through a 21/2-in concrete step to explode in a cellar and damage the nearby 4-in gas main. The next HE hit a parapet on No 3 Jesus Lane, ricocheting on to the opposite wall before exploding in the basement of No 4 Jesus Lane. Scars caused by fragmentation from these incidents may still be found on the wall of Trinity College opposite. Most unfortunate was the effect of a 50 kg HE which penetrated a flanking wall of the Union Debating Society's first floor writing room, causing much damage. Nearby, the British Restaurant had a narrow escape for a bomb there did not explode, whereas two other 50 kg HEs in gardens burst, one behind No 22 Portugal Place and the other demolishing a shed in the Union Debating Society's garden. No 4 St Clements Garden received another which, upon exploding on the ground floor, caused partial collapse of a partition wall. Luckiest of all must have been the irreplaceable Round Church, close to which the bombs had fallen. ... The fire bombs ignited to a curious cracking sound, and soon after the raid, with the top of No 4 Jesus Lane burning, likewise the Union Society building, it was apparent that unconventional explosive incendiaries had been used and their precise nature was soon discovered. Into 13 Portugal Place, eight feet up, had come an unusual bomb akin in shape to a 50 kg HE weapon. After bouncing on to the front hearth, and leaving appropriate skid marks, it had penetrated into the basement's party wall and failed to burst. ... Another rested unexploded within outbuildings in The Mitre's' yard. ...

What had arrived, possibly for the first time in East Anglia, were Sprengband C.50s, the first 'Firepots'. ... Raid casualties totalled three killed and eighteen injured, six seriously. Three houses and seven other buildings were badly hit, 127 more variously damaged, (Bowyer p241) [6.7,8.10] 85 05 24b

Lone raider's bombs – three killed, others injured, damage to business and houses – 42 07 28, 28a, b

1942 07 30

German raiders were active but no bombs dropped; considerable opposition from ground defences, hundreds in streets saw lively exchange of fire, tracer bullets could be seen in both directions. Later another single machine, flying at roof-top height was men with fire from ground – 42 07 30

1942 08 01

Recent raid damage at Cambridge: bombs on Union Society; debating hall escapes; flying at less than a hundred feet and in full view of many people a German raider dropped HE and incendiary bombs. Main damage was done to the library, writing room, committee room and the lounge. Masonry which was flung about by the explosion burst through the roofs and all the windows at the front of the premises and overlooking Round Church Street were blown out. The debating hall was only very slightly damaged and that mostly by water. The end of the library received a direct hit from a small high explosive bomb and several fire bombs but the steel stacks in which the books were housed saved them from the effect of the blast. The collection of music books were lost. One stained glass window of the Round Church was blown in, otherwise the church escaped – 42 08 01, 42 08 01a

1942 08 03

End of a raider – picture of German raider that fell in field – 42 08 03

1942 08 07

Incendiary bombs Unicam factory, North Chesterton, then incendiaries over Leys Road, Orchard Avenue, Arbury Rd. Then between Shirley School – Scotland Rd & Kendal Way. Third shoal of incendiaries ignited in Chesterton Rd. Four HEs exploded in Stourbridge Common / Garlic Row area then Barnwell Bridge, Ditton Walk and Ditton Fields (Bowyer p247)

Sharp attack on East Anglian town, few casualties; fire guards prove their worth; the most intensive raid, only four people slightly hurt. A few HE landed on open ground where they did not damage except to one cow that had to be destroyed. Many houses sustained direct hits from incendiaries but fire parties had the flames under control and NFS pumps were soon in action. Mr Story said he had just taken his young child from its cot when an incendiary crashed through the rafters and on to the empty cot. In another outlying part a 'bread-basket' of incendiaries fell in the road and damage by blast was caused to shop premises. Incendiaries were also scattered over other streets and little piles of sand testify to the efforts of the fireguards. Here and there a hole could be seen in the rafters of houses where bombs had scored direct hits. Charred window frames and little piles of scorched furniture outside were further evidence. One air raid warden returned home to find the house adjacent to his had been almost completely destroyed by fire. The new phosphorous bombs were also dropped. [700 incendiaries dropped Chesterton, Unicam factory, Stourbridge Common Newmarket Road, Ditton Fields] – 42 08 07

1942 08 18

Ant-aircraft guns – why they do not go off – co-operation with fighter command; sometimes guns act as 'beaters' for fighters or fighters 'beat' for guns; would also give raider detail of where they are – 42 08 18

1942 08 26

Duke of Kent killed in plane crash – 42 08 26

1942 08 29

A 250 kg bomb tumbled to the north of Cambridge into a field on Chivers' Farm just to the east of Arbury Road's Unicom Works and north of the Mere Way. A loud explosion preceded a lot of black smoke (Bowyer p252)

1942 09 09

German raider shot down by night fighter – Dornier crashed on a farm near a village; seven mobs on experimental farm, cottages damaged – 42 09 09a

1942 10 02

High-explosives near Histon and another near Roseford Rd (Bowyer p272)

1942 10 06

Plane crashed in middle of Somersham, eight killed and six cottages wrecked – 42 10 06, caused by ignition of flare – 42 10 16

1943 01 04

Civil training plane, piloted by a woman, failed to take off from a local flying field at Cambridge and crashed into house, three trapped, pilot killed. House previously occupied by the head of the firm operating the flying field – 43 01 04, 43 01 06a

1943 01 30

Harry Denton Hartle awarded medal after plane taken off from airfield crashed and burst into flames near home, lived Milton – 43 01 30

1943 02 11

Alleged sabotage at aerodrome – tore up vital plans – Irish labourer sent for trial – 43 02 11a

1943 02 05

Sole survivor of Air Crash. Mr. John Howard, the young British diplomat, who was the sole survivor of an air liner crash in Peru last week, is the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Howard, of 257, Chesterton Road. Cambridge. His parents on Friday received a cablegram from the hospital where he was taken, saying that there is no need to worry. Mr Howard, who is 28 years of age, was educated at the Perse School, and later at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, of which he is an M.A. He went out to South America about six months ago, and at the time of the crash was flying from Buenos Aires to Miami. News from Lima (Peru) described how Mr. Howard was catapulted from the back seat of the plane when the Liner crashed into a mountainside. The purser was sitting, with him, and was also thrown out but he died later from his injuries. For three days, it was stated, Mr. Howard lay injured beside the bodies of the victims before rescue services could reach him. The bodies of the 15 dead, who included three women and two other British diplomats, were taken to the Anglo-American Hospital at Lima.

1943 02 20

Folk Museum annual meeting, E. Saville Peck acting chairman, Frost's flying machine had been offered but was nowhere to store it – 43 02 20a

1943 03 05

Farm fire follows Incendiaries. Slight enemy activity occurred over a rural district of East Anglia early yesterday. A shower of incendiary bombs dropped by a single plane caused damage to farm buildings and stacks, but it is understood that nobody was hurt. Members of the N.F.S. were occupied for some considerable time before they were able to get the fire under control.

1943 04

Tests of the first jet-powered fighter were conducted at Newmarket Heath where on 10th July 1942 taxiing trial were held and two attempted take-offs made. It was then abandoned until more powerful

engines became available. The first flight from the Heath took place in April 1943 but due to the bumpy surface fuel loads had to be kept to a minimum CDN 16.7.1954

1943 04 09

Wedding salute by planes. Planes dipped in salute over St. Mary's Church, St. Neots, on Saturday, when a Cambridge D.F.M. Flying Officer and a St. Neots young lady were being married. The bridegroom was Flying Officer Arthur Charles Leigh, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Leigh, of 6, Green End Road, Cambridge, and the bride Miss Joan Irene Townsend, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs F. Townsend, of 42, Cambridge Gardens, St. Neots. The bridegroom's Commanding Officer was among those attending the reception afterwards.

1943 04 12

Bringing bombers back to earth – work of the Flying Control during fog or when damaged – 43 04 12

1943 04 14

Construction of airfields – problems addressed – 43 04 14

1943 04 28

Plane crashes at Wilbraham Fen, kills pilot – 43 04 28a

1943 05 13

Plane crashes Newmarket racecourse, racing postponed – 43 05 13a

1943 05 21

Awarded the D.F.C.—The King has been pleased to approve the following award in recognition of gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations: D.F.C.: P.O. David Rogers, R.A.F.V.R., No. 9 Squadron. Pilot Officer Rogers has taken part in many operational sorties against the enemy. He has invariably displayed efficiency and ability of a high order as a wireless-operator-air gunner. Under the most harassing circumstances his coolness and courage had been worthy of the highest praise and has rendered him a valuable member of his squadron. Pilot Officer Rogers was born in 1914 at Histon where his home is.

1943 06 07

Painting of an aircraft in flight, autographed by British and American service men has been subject of a competition in aid of Prisoners of War Fund at Eagle in Bene't Street. Other men have covered ceiling with lipstick or lighter flame records of their own units – 43 06 07

1943 07 31

Two men awarded for saving aircraft in fire at hangar containing 26 aircraft (incident probably took place in Southampton) – 43 07 31

1943 08 20

Awarded D.F.M. A former member of the Cambridge Borough Police Force, Sergt. Douglas Alaric Boards, R.A.F., whose mother lives at 80 Radegund Road, has been awarded the D.F.M. for his part in saving a burning bomber,

1943 09 06

Observer Corps work – photo – 43 09 06a; area nerve centre in Cambridge – photos – 43 11 10a

1943 09 06

University Air Squadron receive picture of Flying Officer Kenneth Campbell, the squadron's first 'VC', the pilot of a lone Beaufort that carried out low level attack on German battle cruisers in Brest harbour' Was 'up' 1937-1939 43 09 06

1943 09 17

Wonders of the Flying Fortress – visit to Memphis Belle – 43 09 17

1943 09 17

Wings for Victor” trophy presentation; includes five aircraft log books to be used in planes bought by Cambridge which will be returned after the war as a permanent memento – 43 09 17a

1943 10 02

Bomb Roseford Rd

Car damaged by bombs dropped during weekend; were no casualties and little other damaged. The car was standing in a shed. – 43 10 07

1943 11 10

Captain A.C. Taylor talks about how the latest instrument of scientific warfare are combined to clear skies of enemy planes – fighter command, balloon barrage, AA guns, searchlights, linked by private telephone lines – 43 11 10

1943 11 23

Home Guard members inspect US bomber station – 43 11 23; also members Anglo-American Hospitality Committee – photo – 43 11 30

1943 12 03

D.S.C. Award.—Acting Squadron Leader Guy de Grave Sells. D.F.C., R.A.F.V.R., No. 83 Sqdn., has been awarded the D.S.O. in recognition of flying operations against the enemy. Squadron Ldr, Sells has participated in a very large number of sorties, involving attacks on targets in the Ruhr and many other important centres. He is an outstanding leader whose achievements have been highly commendable. His home is at Harston.

1944 02 24

Sirens sounded in Cambridge at 22:30 and, 'two red flares south-south-west, red shell bursts, three large explosions, many incendiary loads south before siren'. ... By dawn the news had spread throughout the town, a Dornier had come down last night on allotments close to St George's Church, Chesterton. It had by inches missed the roof of Chesterton Institution to belly land in the extreme north-east corner of the open ground ... it had arrived almost completely unharmed carrying plentiful petrol and its full bomb load. How, just how, did it come to make an almost perfect belly landing? (Bowyer)

Dornier 217 crashes on allotments – 44 02 24, photos 44 02 25

1944 03 06

Town Clerk's daughter killed in plane crash when testing Tiger Moth after repair – 44 03 06

1944 06 02

U.S. Military cemetery dedicated. Memorial Day — the day when Americans pay special honour to their dead— was marked in Cambridgeshire on Tuesday, with a service at the U.S. Military Cemetery (at Maddingley). High ranking officers of the American and British Armies, as well as the R.A.F. were present together with leading civic representatives of the Eastern Region and the Town, University and County of Cambridge. A detachment of the British Legion, with their colours, members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the British Red Cross Society, and members of the W.V.S., who have undertaken to provide flowers for the chapel, were also among the large gathering. Centrepiece of the service was a small grass mound, rising from which flew the Stars and Stripes. The Bishop of Ely (Edward Wynn) walked to the mound from the little chapel, followed by the senior officers carrying wreaths. The ceremony opened with an invocation, followed by a scripture reading and a prayer for the fallen. An Order of the Day was read from the Allied commander-in-chief (Gen Eisenhower). During the service either by accident or design three Fortresses flew low over the company. Official

and private wreaths were laid and the proceedings came to a close with the National Anthems of America and Britain, the Benediction by the Bishop of Ely and finally "Taps" by two buglers

1944 06 16

Nazis use pilotless aircraft in raids on Britain – 44 06 16; robot plane crashes on Hospital (not local) – 44 06 17

1944 08 16

RAF plane crashes in flames at Burwell, civilian and three crew killed – 44 08 16

1944 08 18

'Journey Together' film made by RAF for RAF features scenes in St John's College – 44 08 18b a

1944 09 04

Bomber crashes Pampisford, four crew and civilian killed; farmhouse damaged – 44 09 04; four American soldiers also killed – 44 09 05; inquest – 44 09 06

1944 10 19

Flying bomb crashes on housing estate in a town – 44 10 19

1944 10 26

Marshall's Flying School strike - 44 10 26a

1944 11 03

Air raids on the Isle of Ely – a list of incidents – Ely Standard 3rd November 1944

1944 12 20

Marshall Flying School Rescue Squad photo – 44 12 20a

1945 01 24

Enemy action – 1,861 bombs and seven mines killed three civilians in 115 parishes – CDN 45 01 24

1945 02 06

Two aircraft crash in mid-air, one fell at Putney Hill Farm near Prickwillow and killed two children – Patricia Legge and Pamela Turner and three others who in bed were injured; - Mrs E. Legge, Mrs G, Howe and Mr R Howe; thought second fell at 'The Bracks' Wicken – CDN 1945 02 06a

1945 02 09

Bomber crashes. Late on Saturday night a returning bomber overshot its aerodrome and landed in a Cambridgeshire village. It came to rest against two dwellings one of which was partly damaged and the other badly damaged. The occupier of one house, Mr. John Bellaire, was in a room when he heard a crash, and on going to the door he found that his bakehouse had been completely demolished and that a plane was standing in its place. A wheel of the plane had come to rest against the house next door, partly demolishing the building. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Murfitt found it a mass of rubble. There were no civilian casualties but the crew of the aircraft were injured.

1945 04 20

Award for Gallantry.—The King has been pleased to approve the following award in recognition of gallantry and devotion to duty in the air operations: D.F.C.: Acting Squadron-Leader Anthony White Farrell, A.F.C., 85281, R.A.F.V.R., No. 105 Squadron. Squadron-Leader Farrell has at all times shown great skill and ability as a pilot. He has displayed outstanding courage and determination during a large number of operational sorties. Many of these have been completed successfully against heavily defended targets in Germany and enemy occupied territory. His high standard of resource and gallantry has enabled his crew to attain valuable results. Acting Squadron-Leader Farrell was born in

1917 at Hampstead, and his home is at Cherry Hinton, Cambs. He enlisted in December, 1939, and was commissioned in September, 1940. He was awarded the A.F.C. in 1944.

1945 05 26

Farewell party of No.4 Regional Column of the Civil Defence Reserve at Newton Hall; established two years ago has 15,000 Civil Defence workers, attended 400 incidents; undertook rescue work and tackled flying bombs and rockets, help with ambulance trains and returned prisoners of war. IN 12 months 570 groups of Civil Defence personnel had gone from the Regional camps and of these 386 groups, representing 12,000 men had gone to air raid damage in the region. Thousands of pounds have been recovered and in one town £3,000 found at one house was handed over. Much valuable property salvaged. Regional Commissioner to resign soon – 45 05 26a September 28, 1945

1945 05 30

Madingley Road factories – was essential that Sebros should be built at the most convenient point for the surrounding aerodromes. The building, working and running of the factory meant a great deal of energy and terrific amount of worry; when built was one of a chain of shadow factories; repaired bombers; was built in wrong place from workers' point of view – should have been built near backs and then Trinity could have been used as a hostel, saving long journeys to work. That part of Madingley Road is hardly a beauty spot – letters – CDN 1945 05 30b

1945 06 08

Secret jobs by Labs & Pye – Radiolocation – Ground Control of Interception designed and built by University Cavendish scientists in conjunction Pye engineers – put fighters at right height on tail of enemy aircraft near enough to pick them up on Airborne Interception equipment – 45 06 08

1945 06 27

Cambridge and the balloon barrage: war work at the Gas Works – were 2,400 balloons. In 1940 supply of hydrogen became difficult and Cambridge approached as to facilities available such as blue water gas and steam or existing plant such as purifiers and gasholders. Was one of 19 sites selected and production hydrogen started early 1942, producing enough for 8,000 balloons. They brought down enemy aircraft over an East Anglian city. Output increased due large number balloons required for the flying bombs. Loads of long round steel cylinders on long trailers carried them. Ascents from Midsummer Common before the last war needed gas supplied from the Newmarket Road works by a main specially aid for the purpose. Recently have made nitrogen of very high degree of purity for Air Ministry – CDN 1945 06 27

1945 06 30

Cambridge had 419 air raid alerts during war according to E.A.B. Barnard – details by year – CDN 1945 06 30; figures disputed – CDN 1945 07 02a

1945 08 03

American aerodromes at Duxford & Fowlmere open to public for first time – 45 08 03a, 45 07 31

1945 09 07

Censorship relaxed, what could not be previously told – Vicarage Terrace, Dornier bomber, Spy shot in shelter – CDN 1945 09 07 & a

1945 09 10

'Behind the scenes with the railway, problems of the Blitz, Cambridge's special efforts at train control room – details – CDN 1945 09 10

1945 09 14

More about Cambridge air raids; some remarkable escapes; bombs which failed to explode – a large book in Guildhall might be placed in Library, the official record of enemy air activity; incendiary n roof of Rock Road library; incidents in county – CDN 1945 09 14a, 14b

1945 09 17

War-time story of the Fitzwilliam Museum; most important works of art sent to private house in Wales and bank in Cornwall, fire watching, stored blankets for Red Cross. RAF wanted a large room to install apparatus to give illusion of pilots flying – but would have caused problems; items returned after VE-Day – 45 09 17b

1945 09 28

Awards for Courage.—The King has been pleased to approve the following awards in recognition of numerous operations against the enemy in which the undermentioned has invariably displayed the utmost fortitude, courage and devotion to duty: D.F.C. Flying Officer John Bramston Luard (15433), R.A.F.V.R., No. 635 Squadron. Flying Officer Luard was born in 1923 at Plymouth. Devon and his home is at Cambridge. He served in the A.T.C., enlisted in 1942, trained in Canada, and was commissioned in 1943. Flying Officer Leonard Harry Hancock (158418), R.A.F.V.R., No. 482 Squadron. Flying Officer Hancock was born in 1921 at Liverpool, and his home is at Cambridge. He was educated at Cambridge and County High School and Jesus College, Cambridge. He enlisted in 1941 and was commissioned in 1943.

1945 09 28

Orders for victory handbells, made from scrap metal from shot down German aircraft, are flowing in thick and fast at the Cambridge Gas Company's showroom, Mr. Stanley Miller, the hon. organiser, tells us. The bells, which are being sold in aid of the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund, are seven inches high and are made at labour cost by a Kentish firm. Some of them have been photographed by Battle or Britain pilots. One of them, personally cast by Group Capt. Douglas Bader, the famous legless flyer, will be sold at Cambridge in the near future to the highest bidder. So far over 70,000 bells have been sold in Britain alone. America has bought 20,000 of them. The metal for the bells comes from a scrap dump at Biggin Hill and was given by the Ministry of Aircraft Production.

1946 02 08

Elementary Gliding Training School at Marshall's hopes to increase 'field' activities – 46 02 08

1946 02 15

Battle of Britain pilot killed in Meteor crash at Milton – 46 02 15

1946 02 25

Landing planes in fog; radar wonders at RAF Bassingbourn – 'Fido' demonstration – 46 02 25

1946 03 02

Richara Morrow-Tait completes flying test for Air Ministry A Licence; has flown solo and will shortly attempt some long distance solo flights. Is first woman pupil to fly alone since war stopped civilian flying – 46 03 02a; photo – 46 03 13

1946 06 12

Cambridge University Air Squadron ceases its wartime function and reverts to peace-time role as flying centre for undergraduates – photo – 46 06 12

1946 08 30

Graveley RAF station wartime memories at inspection – 46 08 30

1946 09 11

Oakington RAF Pathfinder station opens public – 46 09 11

1946 09 13

First Meteor jet plane on exhibition at Marshall's – 46 09 13

1946 09 18

Lancaster crashes in field off Cambridge Road, Waterbeach – 46 09 18

1946 10 19

If an aircraft brought to Marshalls and found to be unusable it was certified to be broken up; certain parts had to be salvaged if in order, if not a hammer put through them and put on salvage dump; one workman had taken clock from Dakota; during war he had won B.E.M. for putting out fire in main hangar – 46 10 19

1947 05 30

Today, May 30th, day on which America remembers her war dead, there was heard over Cambridge a sound which was once so frequent above the English countryside – the roar of the engines of a Flying Fortress, the sound of which was the requiem of so many of the gallant, gay and generous company of American service men and women, nearly 7,000 of them, who lie at rest among the green and wooded loveliness that forms the slopes of Madingley Hill. Some hundreds of members of the public had made the journey up the hill to join in the ceremony, proof that the affection inspired in our midst by the American troops and Air Forces was of the kind which transcends death

1947 07 08

Flying officer R.W. Ford was ferrying a Meteor jet-aircraft from Gloucester to West Raynham yesterday, when turbine trouble forced him to attempt a landing at Cambridge Airport. He crash-landed in a barley field about 200 yards short of the airfield. The tail unit broke off, and the aircraft turned completely round before skidding to a stop. Flying Officer Ford stepped out, uninjured except for a chip in the skin on the bridge of his nose. Within an hour he was on his way in an Anson that had been sent to fetch him. Crash-apparatus from the airport was quickly on the scene and R.A.F., Waterbeach, provided a guard 47 07 08

1947 08 12

One of this morning's news items was: "The Secretary of State for War flew to Germany today. He travelled in an R.A.F. Transport Command aircraft". When you read that and similar items concerning famous men journeying in Service aircraft you can be pretty sure that the crew and their plane have come from Bassingbourn R.A.F. Station. There is the "home" of 24 (Commonwealth) Squadron whose job is carrying V.I.P.s. The aircraft used are Yorks, Lancastrians and Dakotas. The Squadron's planes all have one thing in common - the shining, burnished brightness of their exterior. Metal polish and elbow grease are the means of obtaining this effect; mechanical polishers cannot be used as they are liable to damage the metal. The planes are masterpieces of smartness

1947 09 08

A Manchester young doctor engaged in atomic research, involving a substance produced infrequently at Cambridge, which becomes useless after about 34 hours, received a telephone message that the substance had been taken out of the instrument. He started from Manchester at midnight and drove to Cambridge mostly through mists. He thought it was essential for him to return at once. At 7am he was involved in an accident which rendered the substance useless. It was impossible to carry the substance mentioned by train because of the number of changes on the route. They had endeavoured to carry it by aircraft but this had not proved practical. At the time of the accident defendant had been driving slowly, because the substance was in glass tubes

1947 09 15

On Saturday airfields and stations throughout East Anglia will be open to the public. The largest - and by common consent certainly the most attractive of these stations is the Bomber Command operational station at Stradishall. It was from these West Suffolk runways during the latter years of the war that Wellingtons, Stirlings and, later, the giant Lancaster bombers took the R.A.F.'s attack right into the heart of industrial Germany. Members of the public will be invited to control an aircraft in flight by radio. If you feel like dropping a bomb you can do so - at the A.M.L. bombing Teacher

1947 09 22

Waterbeach R.A.F. station - a wartime home of Bomber Command and now operated by Transport Command - was on Saturday invaded by at least ten thousand people at the Air Forces "at home" on the 7th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Waterbeach is one of the permanent type of R.A.F. stations, and its main job is the transporting of troops, mail and freight from this country to Singapore. Daily giant Avro Yorks, as safe and as comfortable as human ingenuity can make them, leave for Lyneham in Wilts, where they pick up passengers. In a large hangar visitors saw an Avro York aircraft being serviced and clambered all over the plane which is capable of carrying 37 people, including crew, and which enables them to travel more comfortably than they would often do on the ground. In another hangar was a German V.1, different kinds of bombs, aircraft spares and equipment.

1948 01 02

The question of providing week end leave transport for personnel at the RAF Station, Oakington, evoked a good deal of discussion at the sitting of the Eastern Area Traffic Commissioners. Mr Lainson (for Premier Travel) mentioned that his company sought to provide a new express service from Oakington RAF to King's Cross, London. The proposed fare was 12s.6d return. He also said they were willing to provide a "feeder" service between Oakington and Cambridge Railway Station as his company could not hope to carry 600 odd personnel direct to London. There were approximately 1,100 personnel on the camp and something like 600 were on weekends each week. In view of the limited station transport it was impossible to cater for all the troops by running into Cambridge Railway Station

1948 03 16

With the glorious sun shining down on it, and the sheep quietly grazing in the surrounding meadow, the lovely old church at Great Abington was on Sunday re-opened after having been closed for nearly two years. It was in 1941 when a bomb fell on the bridge, which is at the present moment undergoing repairs, that the church suffered its first shock. Then one was dropped on the Land Settlement, an aircraft also crashed in the vicinity, and there were one or two other explosions nearby which finally necessitated the closing of the church in November 1946, as it was considered unsafe for public worship. The work of restoration was begun in that year, but then had to be stopped for a time until a few months ago when Messrs Rattee and Kett Ltd, of Cambridge, were able to re-start and complete it

1948 05 11

The watching eyes of Britain's air defence went into action on Sunday in the biggest-scale Royal Observer Corps activity in the district since the war. Observer posts were manned at Cherry Hinton, Linton, Caxton, St Ives, Abbots Ripton, Littleport and elsewhere following the movements of jet fighters, Spitfires, Lancaster and Lincoln bombers and other types of aircraft numbering over 100 aircraft put up by the RAF. At Linton I found the observers proud of their post, built at their own expense by their own labours during the war

1948 06 08

Concern at the possibility of parts of Cambridgeshire countryside being taken over by the R.A.F. for practice bombing ranges was voiced at a meeting in Trinity College. They propose to set up practice bombing ranges at Babraham (near Duxford aerodrome), East Hatley (near Bassingbourn and Bourn) and North of Whittlesey. These ranges, it said, are used from time to time for dropping marker bombs only and when the red flag is flying and the footpaths across are blocked. At Babraham the range is crossed by two footpaths but the footbridge across the river is broken down.

1948 08 07

A Cambridge firm is to help the air-lift to Berlin. Messrs Marshalls are to service some of the RAF Dakotas taking part in the lift. Marshalls did a big job servicing RAF planes in the war and have more recently worked on Mosquitoes. This however will be the first time the planned maintenance system has been operated by the firm, though a similar system is in use in their vehicle repair shop

1948 08 18

Flying a proctor light aircraft Mrs Richarda Morrow-Tait of Cambridge set out from Marshall's airport on her attempt to be the first woman to fly a light aircraft round the world. She was accompanied by her navigator and co-pilot Mr Michael Townsend of Cranmer Road, Cambridge. They carried only a minimum amount of baggage but included in it was a .303 rifle and ammunition, as part of the flight will be over uninhabited territory. Maps and baggage stowed away, including some sandwiches cut for Mrs Morrow-Tait by her husband the two climbed into the aircraft. Her husband said, "She is a wonderful person, full of courage and determination. The machine is an ex-RAF aircraft which has been thoroughly overhauled and fitted with a reconditioned engine. 48 08 1

1948 08 19

Miss Morrow-Tait, 24-year-old flying mother, today abandoned her around-the-world flight attempt. She left Marshall's airport yesterday but her plane was damaged in landing at Marseilles last night. She told Reuter's correspondent, "I hit a small ditch owing to bad visibility. The propeller was twisted, a wing damaged and the undercarriage also suffered. Our plan for a round-the-world flight in 200 hours is no longer realisable. I think I will probably go back to London and start again". When a C.D.N. reporter told her husband of her accident he said, "I don't care twopence about her abandoning the flight. I expect she will have another go" 48 08 19

1948 08 20

During the past fortnight something like 700 American airmen have landed at Lakenheath where 31 giant silver Super-Fortress bombers now line the runways of this big new R.A.F. station. Officially they are stated to be on a strictly training mission, a mission with "no political significance". They are certainly not living in the lap of luxury. They are eating R.A.F food but as one American spokesman put it "there is a likelihood of our supplementing rations with our own stuff before long". Oklahoma-born Major L.J. Avery summed up what the Americans were thinking. "We have been here before, and it looks like we are here again for a spell"

1948 09 10

A Mosquito aircraft took off from Cambridge Airport on July 5th and has not been heard of since. Yesterday the Ministry of Civil Aviation confirmed that this aircraft had disappeared in addition to the four former RAF Beaufighters, already reported missing. It has been suggested that a secret organisation had made elaborate plans to facilitate the purchase of surplus aircraft suitable for military use in the Middle East. Brief reports from secret service agents tend to confirm that the missing Beaufighters are in Palestine. The Mosquito owner VC Group Captain G.L. Cheshire said he bought two Mosquitoes in 1946, "The ministry refused to issue certificates of airworthiness, so they were useless to me. I stored one at Cambridge and the other at Abington"

1948 09 18

The almost inexhaustible number of uses to which synthetic resin can be put in Britain's post-war industries was demonstrated at an exhibition by Aero Research Ltd, Duxford. Features include the many uses to which one of the firm's adhesives "Redux" can be put in the construction of aircraft. In contrast to this was the house-hold carpet sweeper and a bedroom suite where aluminium sheets are bonded to veneer with corrugated cardboard interior packing. Another section is devoted to "Araldite", a new resin used in metal-to-glass and metal-to-metal bonding with exhibits loaned by the Atomic Research establishment at Hanwell

1948 09 20

The normally peaceful lanes leading to Stradishall airfield hummed with the sounds of traffic. A constant stream of motor cars and motor coaches was pouring into the spacious confines of this huge Suffolk Bomber Command station - not to mention the largest number of bicycles were have ever seen at an outdoor event. We even saw grandma gazing intently at the rear gun position of a B.29, or, as we prefer to call them, the Superforts. High spot of the flying display was an attack by six Lancasters and six Lincolns on a specially constructed "village" in the centre of the airfield. One

attack was sufficient to blast it to a pile of burning rubble. There was a Spitfire too, and if you felt so inclined you could have your photograph taken seated in the cockpit

1948 11 17

Days of the “flying farmer” were foreshadowed at the Cambridge cattle market when a Tiger Moth dual-control aircraft was auctioned along with the more usual agricultural implements. It was bought for £100 by Mr Jack Branch, of Waterbeach, an agricultural contractor and motor dealer. The machine, once an RAF aircraft was advertised in the catalogue as “engine as new, airframe done 1,508 hours at the last inspection”. It is the first time that an aircraft has been auctioned at the cattle market. Interested spectators climbed on to the lorry on which it rested to inspect it, while small boys took the opportunity of climbing into the cockpit. A civil aviation expert estimated that a similar aircraft in going order would be priced about £250.

1949 11 08

The Chief of Air Staff, Marshall of the R.A.F. Lord Tedder came to Cambridge to unveil the war memorial at Magdalene College and to open the new Headquarters and Mess of the Cambridge University Air Squadron at Chaucer Road. The Cambridge unit was the first University air squadron not only in Britain but the world.

1948 12 08

Cambridgeshire is the home base of some 50% of the RAF aircraft and crews at present bringing help on the airlift to Berlin. Oakington, one of the war-time Pathfinder airfields, and Waterbeach, are the two stations on which Dakota squadrons taking part in the lift have their home base. Another Cambridge link is that the commander of the squadron equipped with Hastings transport aircraft is a Cambridge man, Squadron-Leader P. J. Finlayson of Milton Road. He was the first man to pilot a Hastings carrying coal into Gatow, one of the Berlin termini of the lift.

1949 01 14

The Lancaster squadrons of the No.3 Bomber Group at present stationed at Stradishall, are shortly to move to Mildenhall. The change has been made necessary because the run-ways at “Strad” are no longer capable of taking heavy bombers. The future of this famous war-time airfield, still one of the most attractive and best equipped in the country, is uncertain. Lighter aircraft might operate from the runways or they may be relaid to take the heaviest type of bomber at present in service with the RAF

1949 02 25

An elderly woman had a narrow escape when a Hornet aircraft crashed on her house and blew up in the back garden of her semi-detached council house at Reed Joint, Barkway. The pilot had bailed out. Mrs S. Smith was downstairs when the plane hit the roof of her house. The explosion which occurred as soon as the aircraft hit the ground, blew out windows in both houses.

1949 05 04

At 15 group operations room of the Royal Observer Corps in Newmarket road, Cambridge, 20 or 30 blue-dashed uniformed men and women took part in a big Observer Corps exercise. Everywhere the sharp-eyed observers at their remote posts reported aircraft in a formula giving the type, number and height. Meteors, Hornets, Messengers, Ansons, Skymasters and Lincolns were some of the aircraft spotted and plotted – the RAF boys doing their best to fox the spotters by hedge-hopping and 500 miles an hour

1949 07 12

Sir - On 2nd July two Hornet aircraft flew over Kings College in perfect visibility at a height of well below 200 feet. My two children were very badly frightened indeed. I feel certain that even at the phenomenal speed of 400 mph in a somewhat out-of-date aircraft, a pilot should be able to avoid the centre of a town the size of Cambridge. There are some parents who have flown in aircraft, and their children too, and they have even been bombed by them. The curious fact is that young children are still scared to death of low-flying aircraft – Edward Leigh

1949 08 03

"Flying housewife", Mrs Richarda Morrow-Tait, of Cambridge, complained of a Canadian transport department official's alleged advice: "Go home and look after your baby". She is trying to finish the last leg of her round the world flight, but the Canadian government has refused to let her fly over their territory

1949 08 20

Cambridge's "flying housewife", Mrs Richarda Morrow-Tait, was resting following her arrival at Croydon last night on completion of her round the world flight, claimed to be the first to be made by a woman. She landed in England 366 days after she had set out from Marshall's airport where she learned her flying. She took off in a single-engined Proctor which was damaged in a forced landing and was replaced by a Vultee Valiant 49 08 20

1949 09 02

Mrs Richarda Morrow-Tait's famous round-the-world flight is now complete to the very last mile. Yesterday she flew "New Thursday's Child", the plane in which she completed her journey on August 19th, from Croydon airport to Marshall's aerodrome, the place where she set off on her mission just over a year ago. Flying alone, she got a particular thrill out of wearing a normal dress for the trip instead of the flying kit to which she had become accustomed

1949 09 20

Air-minded people to the number of 9,000 visited Waterbeach RAF station for the "At Home" day, part of the commemoration of the Battle of Britain. The station is the base of 24 (Commonwealth) station of transport command. Making its first appearance was a small monoplane built by F/Lt J.R. Coates, a flight engineer on the station.

1949 09 22

The assistant postmaster general opened Newmarket's new automatic telephone exchange. The post office was mindful of the fact that unlike Newmarket, which had got only one person waiting for the telephone, there were half a million people requiring that service. He hoped that having got its new telephone exchange it would not be long before they also got its new post office. The exchange replaces the one put out of action on 18th February 1941 when a German plane dropped 10 h.e. bombs as it flew over Newmarket High Street

1949 10 13

Newmarket and surrounding districts were shaken by an enormous explosion when a giant 6-engined American B50, the latest type of US bomber still on the secret list, crashed at Isleham. All members of the crew, believed to consist of 12 airmen, were killed instantly. The blazing remains of the aircraft were scattered over the area of 500 square yards on the Beck Road. Neighbouring farm buildings and haystacks at Worlington were set afire. The B50 is designed for long-distance bombing and is said to be specially adapted for carrying atom bombs 49 10 13

1949 11 08

The Chief of Air Staff, Marshall of the R.A.F. Lord Tedder came to Cambridge to unveil the war memorial at Magdalene College and to open the new Headquarters and Mess of the Cambridge University Air Squadron at Chaucer Road. The Cambridge unit was the first University air squadron not only in Britain but the world 49 11 08

1950 02 18

Cambridge University Air Squadron's silver jubilee dinner at the University Arms also celebrated the arrival at Marshall's airport of an appropriate "gift" from the Air Ministry – the first batch of the eagerly-awaited new Chipmunk training aircraft which are replacing the squadron's Tiger Moth. In its 25-years the squadron had three types of trainers – the Avro 504, then in 1934 the Tutor and in 1940 the Tiger Moth 50 02 18 [2.50]

1950 04 25

An RAF jet "Meteor" fighter blew up in mid-air while flying over Newmarket, the pilot being killed instantly. The explosion, which shook the windows of houses and shops in the High Street, was seen by a large crowd of housewives who were out shopping. One witness said it completely broke up, folding into nothing. Only the fuselage held intact. The Meteor crashed into the ground some way off the Bury Road on the edge of Moulton Paddocks, and wreckage was strewn over an area a mile square

1950 05 05

The Secretary of State for Air has said it has now been decided that Mepal would not be retained for RAF use and the airfield had been allocated for long-term agricultural use. The Ely Rural Council had been requested to take over responsibility for housing the Poles who lived in the hutted camp to the East of the aerodrome.

1950 05 10

Two Cambridge railwaymen, driver John Collingwood and guard Alfred Palmer have been awarded the "Daily Herald" Order of Industrial Heroism. The rescue which won them the "Workers VC" was made just a year ago at the Air Ministry's private siding at Lord's Bridge. Coming round a blind corner a goods train collided with a RAF motor lorry loaded with bombs. The driver was knocked unconscious and trapped in his cab; the petrol tank was smashed and petrol splashed onto the bonnet which was smoking fiercely. Several bombs fell off the lorry and rolled towards a pool of petrol. Despite the danger the railwaymen ran to the lorry, released the driver, lifted him out of the cab and carried him to safety.

1950 09 15

43 flying farmers and their wives from Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire spent ten crowded hours at the other side of England and still got home in time for supper. By means of a specially chartered aerial taxi service from Marshall's Cambridge to Speke airport, Liverpool, they were able to witness the receiving end of the Government's African groundnuts scheme – the production of animal feeding stuffs and soap. For most of them it was the first time in the air. The party had boarded two chartered Dakotas for the journey as the guests of J. Bibby and sons, the well-known manufacturer of cattle and poultry feeding stuffs.

1950 09 18

For many of the 7,500 spectators the 'At Home' held at RAF station Oakington, (some of whom wore handlebar moustaches and ex-service ties), probably brought back memories of wartime experiences. Spectators poured in by bus, car and bicycle and some even walked or hitch-hiked. Small boys sat in the pilot's seat of the Prime Minister's personal aircraft and imagined themselves airmen. The 'beating-up' of the aerodrome by a Meteor jet fighter from Waterbeach was probably the biggest thrill of the afternoon.

1950 09 22

Roger Keith Woollard of Mill Road, Cambridge, - eight years old – is surely Cambridge's youngest aircraft recognition expert. You can see him any Sunday up at Cambridge airport noting down numbers and types of aircraft flying there with the same enthusiasm that some youngsters collect car or engine numbers. I asked him what he did if an aircraft arrived which he could not identify. "I go and ask the duty pilot what it is", he said. His devotion to this hobby deserves recognition, I would suggest by the appointment as the official mascot of Marshall's airport

1950 10 06

Waterbeach and Upwood are amongst airfields which are "warming up" in preparation for the start of the biggest air exercise since the war. It has been designed to test the control of air defence operations. Cambridge members of the Royal Observer Corps will man the operations room in the Newmarket Road headquarters and posts throughout the countryside. Every aircraft passing over the county will be plotted, and the information passed to the RAF.

1950 10 11

The crew of 11 of a USAAF B50 Super Fortress escaped when it crash-landed in flames at Mildenhall last night. The aircraft was returning from a routine flight and had one engine feathered. The right wing tip caught the runway and the external petrol tank burst into flames. The aircraft slid, burning furiously, for 500 yards but the crew scrambled to safety and were uninjured. The aircraft was a total loss

1950 12 22

Cambridge has gone one better than flying saucers, for reports have been reaching me indicating that the sky has been pretty full of flying Father Christmases this week. The old man got really up-to-date when he made what may have been his first trip in a helicopter. He had an appointment at a party for the children of the staff of Pest Control. Earlier he had journeyed in a Chipmunk plane to Marshall's Airport where RAF Volunteer Reservists gave a party for their children.

1951 01 18

Newmarket folks turned their eyes to the skies when the world's largest, and certainly noisiest, bomber passed overhead. The aircraft was one of the US B-36 bombers which arrived at the USAF base, Lakenheath, a few days ago. It was beginning its return flight to America, flying direct via the North Pole, and the two supplementary fuel tanks attached to the wing tips were clearly seen as the huge machine roared over the rooftops.

1951 01 19

Local firms are amongst those to whom the De Havilland enterprise has paid public tribute for their contribution in supplying parts for the two Comet jet airlines whose achievements have been acclaimed throughout the world as an outstanding example of British enterprise. They are Aero research of Duxford, whose 'Redux' metal-to-metal bonding is used throughout the airframe, Magnetic Devices, Ditton Works, Cambridge who supply relays and Pye Ltd who developed micro-switches for the plane.

1951 02 05 c

Three survived out of a crew of eight when a US Superfortress crashed and burst into flames at Manor Farm, Abington Piggotts shortly after taking off from Bassingbourn RAF station. The survivors were in the tail unit which broke away and somersaulted over the main wreckage into a neighbouring field. The crew inside stepped out almost unhurt. Firemen entered the blazing fuselage in their search for the rest of the crew. Exploding ammunition added to the danger of the work c51 02 05

1951 05 04

All three members of the crew of a Wellington bomber were killed when it crashed at Brampton. The plane grazed the tower of the church, damaged the roofs of four cottages, struck a "keep-left" sign and ploughed into the garden of a house, demolishing a summer-house. The aircraft disintegrated, the main part of the wreckage lying in the Thrapston -Huntingdon road.

1951 05 19

Weather conditions permitting, a helicopter will be used over Cambridge to make an experimental traffic count. It is believed to be the first time an aircraft has been used for this purpose. If the experiment succeeds it will mean a great saving in manpower. A series of aerial photographs will be taken from the helicopter by means of an R.A.F photographic reconnaissance camera operated by Mr G.P. Reece of University Cameras. A cine-film was also being taken of the flow of traffic at important junctions in the town.

1951 06 30

A squadron commander at RAF Waterbeach was killed when his Meteor jet aircraft got into a roll at between 60 and 70 feet and dived into the ground. It was 2-300 yards from the end of the runway and

completely disintegrated, having exploded after the crash. The coroner remarked the accident was the unfortunate result of one of the risks which airmen took in the course of their duty.

1951 07 04

A partly-open parachute was found in the wreckage of a training plane that crashed in a field at Yelling, Hunts. It belonged to the pilot of one of two planes which collided in mid-air. The occupant of the other machine descended by parachute. Arthur Larkin, agricultural labourer of Staploe, Beds., said: "I heard a noise in the sky. I looked up and saw one plane diving to earth with a wing missing; the other one was coming in my direction but turned and dived". Parts of both machines were strewn over a fairly large area and the engine of one of them was buried in the ground.

1951 08 09

A lorry driver was killed and an aeroplane crew of two seriously injured when a plane crashed at Ely. The Harvard two-seater from RAF Feltwell, first struck the top of a forge owned by Messrs Brand Brothers, then careered across the street, ending up with the tail and part of the body in St Mary's street, and the engine and forepart of the aircraft in a showroom belonging to Messrs T.W. Nice, garage proprietors. During its journey it hit a lorry owned by Darby's Sand and Gravel; its cab was hurtled into the showroom and the driver buried under the engine. One wing of the plane came off and overturned a car, the other ploughed into the middle of the road.

1951 08 29

An American F.84 Thunderjet hurtled out of control between the houses on either side of St John's Street, Beck Row and finally crashed outside the police station, killing the pilot. Several houses were damaged by pieces of wreckage but there were no civilian casualties. The aircraft, carrying out a routine flight over Mildenhall airfield, struck the runway with a wing when doing a banking turn. The pilot attempted to regain control but the aircraft hit the wing of a bomber standing near, ripping it off. It flew down the road with bits of wreckage falling off it. Then the tailplane fell off and it crashed.

1951 08 30

Witnesses said that a Scimitar Wing Handley Page 88 experimental jet plane "bucked like a horse" and exploded in mid-air before crashing at Stansted aerodrome. The high-speed prototype research plane was only taken off the secret list this summer. A main feature is the wing (swept back and then swept forward), the design of which, with the speed and performance of the plane is still secret. A farmer said: "The right wing appeared to come off and then the plane turned and the left wing came off and the plane broke up".

1951 09 17

The pilot of a Meteor jet fighter was killed before 3,000 to 4,000 horrified spectators following a mid-air collision with another Meteor at the Battle of Britain "open day" display at R.A.F. Station, Waterbeach. His mother was among those who saw the accident. One Meteor crashed within 200 yards of the crowd, burst into flames and exploded. The other fell on the edge of the airfield near the Cambridge-Ely road. It too burnt and exploded. The display was abandoned and the station commander said over the loudspeaker: "In view of the tragedy you have just witnessed there will be no more flying to-day. You are asked to go home as quickly as possible".

1951 09 27

The cause of the aeroplane crash in St Mary's Street, Ely, in August when a lorry driver was killed instantly and a pilot instructor received injuries which proved fatal, will always remain a mystery. At the resumed inquest the surviving member of the Harvard training plane's crew of two could remember nothing from the time when he was asked if he would like to try some new aerobatics to regaining consciousness in the R.A.F. hospital several hours later. A verdict of misadventure was returned.

1951 11 14

A strong detachment of uniformed and plain clothed police were on duty and a proctor and two bulldogs were at the entrance at the Labour Hall, Norfolk Street, Cambridge for the visit of Mrs Monica Felton. When Dr Joseph Needham, chairman of the Britain-China Friendship Association told hecklers that the Chinese viewed the dropping of the atom bomb on Japan as encouraging racial hatred. They do not believe it would have been dropped on a European nation. Mrs Felton described her visit to Korea where a town of 126,000 people had been 'systematically destroyed' by bombing by American jets and told of atrocities "too horrible to report", including civilians being buried alive. It was their responsibility to see these horrors stop and now.

1951 12 07

Waterbeach R.A.F. station is the scene of a "scramble" by Meteors which is shown in the "short" film called "Wing to Wing" at the Regal Cinema. The rapid take-off – a Waterbeach speciality – makes an impressive shot. The film gives a vivid impression of present and future aircraft of the R.A.F. Its "stars" are the Canberra and Valiant jet bombers, together with the Swift jet fighter.

1951 12 17

Training aircraft crashes at Marshall's - 51 12 17

1952 01 04

An R.A.F. Meteor jet fighter crashed near Melbourn and wreckage was spread over a wide area. The pilot died on arrival at Royston Hospital after bailing out. A farm worker, Mr Stanley Wing, who was working on a stack near the crash received a fright when an engine whistled past him to bury itself in the ground nearby. Villagers in Melbourn reported that bits of the wreckage landed in the streets and on houses. There was, however, no fire.

1952 01 23

Five of the crew were killed when an R.A.F. Lincoln bomber from Upwood, Huntingdonshire, crashed and caught fire at Fincham, near Downham Market. Rescuers pulled one survivor from the wreckage and took him to hospital. The bomber had been diverted to Marham and was waiting to land. It flew low over the main road from Downham Market to Swaffham, struck a tree and burst into flames after crashing. Explosions were heard and wreckage was flung over several fields.

1952 06 11

Cambridge Model Aircraft Club held their first "Jetex" flying competition at R.A.F. Waterbeach airfield. The first competing aircraft was towed in, stored snugly in a neat box bicycle trailer and soon other men were rummaging happily as children in a toy cupboard over the side-cars of their motor cycles or car boots. The jets have been in the development stage for nearly five years but sometimes the jet unit would become detached, hissing across the concrete or burn itself out in the long grass. D. Lipscombe, whose plane stayed up for one and a half minutes carried off the Challenge Cup

1952 06 12

With all the familiar colour and dignity of a royal occasion, the date of the Queen's coronation – June 2nd next year – was proclaimed today to the people of the city and county of Cambridge. It was a happy coincidence that it should mark a fitting and optimistic finale to the gay and glittering story of the May Week celebrations. A girl still in her May Ball gown and cloak was amongst a crowd of people outside the Shire Hall courts when the High Sheriff, following a fanfare, read the ancient proclamation. On the Market Square a crowd several hundred strong was silent when the Town Clerk began to read but his voice was all but lost in the howl from jet planes speeding overhead.

1952 08 16

The public concern about jet fighter crashes is not shared by the men most affected – the pilots who fly the R.A.F.'s 600 m.p.h. Meteors and Vampires. On a special visit to the Advanced Flying School, Oakington, I found not the slightest trace of alarm or despondency. The atmosphere fairly crackles with energy and enthusiasm. Dozens of flights took place with smooth precision and at frequent

intervals the gleaming silver Meteors howled down the runway and shot up into the sky, many flown by young National Servicemen who by the time they have finished their course are not only skilled jet flyers but are beginning to know how to use their aircraft as weapons. The Chief Instructor, Wing Commander Tomalin, persuaded me to accompany him on a half-hour trip in a Meteor two-seater.

1952 08 23

The first National Servicemen to be trained as Canberra jet crews are receiving their final training at 231 Operational Conversion Unit R.A.F. station, Bassingbourn. In one room twenty young men in flying helmets were busily working with slide rules and graph paper in small box-like cubicles containing an exact replica of what they would have in the plane, including the latest radar equipment. Another block was fitted out for "ejector seat" drill and it should take only 10 seconds to get from the nose of the aircraft back to one's seat prior to being ejected. Since the National Service aircrew scheme started in 1949 some 4,000 men have been accepted for flying duties

1952 09 10

Two Meteor jet aircraft collided in mid-air over Over. One of the pilots landed near the church & the other near the Pike and Eel public house. The landlady observed: "We often have pilots calling here – but not by parachute". The electricity supply was cut when one of the planes struck an electric cable in Mow Fen, Swavesey. The other fell in a meadow behind Station Road, Over. Firemen put out magnesium flames which broke out in one of the engines after its impact on hitting the ground. The two aircraft were on a training flight from R.A.F. Station, Oakington

1952 09 22

Speeds of up to 660 mph were reached by more than 30 British and American jet aircraft which took place in an "At Home" display at RAF Station, Duxford. Thousands of people watched the display and similar ones at RAF Oakington, Debden and Upwood. It opened with a fly-past of three Washington bombers which, together with the renowned Lincolns are now the only four-engined piston bombers in service with the RAF. There was an exhibition of teamwork by one of Duxford's two squadrons of Meteor jets who took part in a mock dog-fight with U.S. F84 Thunder jets and a display from the long-nosed Super Marine Attacker

1952 09 23

The lone Hurricane which always has the place of honour at the head of the air parade over London was the opening item in the flying programme at Oakington RAF station's Battle of Britain "At Home". Gusts of laughter swept the aerodrome during the comedy antics of a "pupil" in a Tiger Moth who tried without a great deal of success to emulate his "instructor" and took part in a remarkable exhibition of marksmanship. The pilot was shooting at balloons on the ground and his firing was so accurate as to be almost incredible – until the secret was revealed by the sudden bolt from cover of the man who had been bursting the targets for him. He was not allowed to escape scot-free but was bombarded with bags of flour and soot.

1952 10 02

Oakington Parish Council has withdrawn their objection to the building of a new road to replace the one crossing the airfield which has been closed. They had claimed the scheme would be a waste of public money, the road would be of no use to Oakington and the route would be a public danger. The Air Ministry said the road would be lowered about two feet to ensure "flying clearance"

1952 10 23

Three farm labourers beet singling in a field at Westley Waterless had a lucky escape when they decided to break off for lunch two minutes before a Meteor jet fighter crashed into the field. Due to the heavy rain they decided to go home for lunch. The engines landed on the spot where the men had just finished working. Two of the men had reached the road but Mr V. Clements had stayed an extra minute or two in order to complete a row and was 50 yards from the crash. The pilot of the plane, on a flight from RAF Waterbeach, was killed.

1952 11 24

There was confirmation from Newmarket of the Cambridge flying saucer report. Mr J. Beirne reported seeing 'a definite circular object while cycling along Madingley Road, Cambridge. Now comes a report from a bus conductor of seeing a 'bright cigar-shaped object' flying at great speed at Newmarket. It gave out an orange-coloured tint and was fire by three small tappets at the rear. There have been isolated cases of practical demonstrations of guided missiles being carried out in the Mildenhall area and on the Norfolk coast. These guided weapons are known to be capable of speeds over 2,000 m.p.h.

1952 11 26

Jet explodes, Huntingdon Road [2.15]

1953 02 25

Messrs Cheffins put Allen's Farm, Teversham, up for sale by auction. The farm of 187 acres which lies about 3½ miles from the City Centre attracted a large company and the bidding quickly advanced to £17,700 at which figure it was knocked down to Marshall's Flying School. It is understood that this was the first auction of property in Teversham since 1906.

1953 09 03

During the War British scientists worked on a secret project for destroying the enemy crops by means of chemicals dropped from aircraft. The method was never used but the discoveries made by the research workers at a "hush hush" plot in East Anglia have since made possible one of the selective weed-killers which destroy the weeds and leave the crops unharmed. In Cambridge dinitro compounds were used to kill some weeds and out of a very nasty idea meant for our enemies came another project – plant hormones, the director of Pest Control told Cambridge businessmen.

1953 03 19

Marshal Tito saw two Meteor jets collide in mid-air and crash in flames as he was watching an air display at Duxford airfield. He jumped to his feet in horror as a great burst of red flame rose hundreds of feet into the air behind some trees at Chrishall. They were two of the four jets which had swept past his armchair before taking off. From their open cockpits the pilots each gave an "eyes left" to the Marshal who saluted back. Just after the crash there was a poignant moment when the two surviving Meteors touched down. Tito rose from his armchair, stood to attention and saluted the planes in tribute to the dead pilots. 53 03 19

1953 04 08

After an all-night search a Meteor jet fighter from R.A.F. station, Bassingbourn, was found near Field Barn, Orwell. The pilot's body was found in the wreckage. At midnight last night the BBC broadcast an appeal for the plane when it was reported missing on a routine flight. Police were asked to look out for the aircraft which was eventually found by an R.A.F. search plane. Mrs D.L. Hallett of Orwell said she was watching her television set when the house was shaken, but she did not hear what had happened until morning. Elsewhere in Orwell nothing was heard.

1953 06 19

An open verdict was recorded at an inquest into the Venezuelan pilot of a Meteor jet plane which crashed near Pasture Farm, Caxton. Wreckage was scattered over a wide area. PC Leonard from Caxton described how he was awakened at 1.20 am by the roar of a low-flying aircraft. From his window he saw a red flash and heard an explosion. The pilot had taken off from Oakington just before midnight. He was in Britain as head of a Venezuela training mission.

1953 08 10

The first question asked by the pilot of the Meteor aircraft which crashed near Bourn village was "Did it hit any houses? Was anyone hurt". Wing Commander Leonard Trent, V.C., had bailed out; many people saw the parachute and gave the alarm. The plane plunged into the earth in a field and buried

itself; fuel escaped and set fire to the standing barley but farm workers beat it out with branches and sticks

1953 08 19

Forty flying pigs from Sweden circled Cambridge airport and then came in to make a perfect landing. Their first sight of England on the ground was the front end of a BBC TV newsreel camera as the doors opened and the pigs stepped unceremoniously from their two aircraft on to waiting trucks. They were the first consignment of Swedish Landrace pigs being imported for breeding purposes by the National Pig Breeders' Association. They had to be flown because of very restricted shipping space and have to be out of quarantine in time for the Peterborough Autumn Sales

1953 11 05

The navigator of a RAF Canberra jet bomber was rescued when the plane crashed into a café at Beck Row, near Mildenhall. The pilot was killed. The proprietor of the café said the plane destroyed the back of his premises, smashed his kitchen table, flattened his car and plunged the whole place into darkness. The jet finished up in his back garden, straddling a chicken run and churning up his vegetables. It must have missed the roof by inches and it was a miracle no one in the café was killed.

1953 12 04

The possibility that Marshall's airfield might be used by jets and other high-powered aircraft provoked a vigorous debate at Cambridge City Council. Coun Warren protested at the construction of a hard landing strip: "The town is going to be menaced by high-powered aircraft which we know nothing about". But Coun Collins suggested that more powerful aircraft must come in time and added "The aircraft now landing there will soon be obsolete". Ald James asked: "If it is essential should the ground have not been moved further out into the country?" 53 12 04

1953 12 16

Four meteor jet fighters crashed in the Duxford area; three pilots parachuted to safety and one was pulled from his wrecked plane by farm workers. They were on a training flight from Waterbeach airfield and were not in collision in the air before crashing. It is possible the pilots abandoned their machines after running short of fuel. It is the second time that a plane has crashed at White House Farm, West Wickham; a Meteor came down at the back of the farm just before harvest.

1954 01 09

A large meteorite is believed to have been seen over Cambridge. Following reports that an explosion, thought to have been due to a meteorite smashing into the earth's atmosphere, had rocked Dieppe about 160 miles from Cambridge, several members of the City Police Force have claimed to have seen the object. P.C. R. Barlow, on duty in Drummer Street described 'a meteorite of exceptional size, oval-shaped and green in colour' falling in a south-east direction. Other policemen claim to have seen the flash as it apparently struck the earth. 54 01 09

1954 02 19

As a result of the Air Ministry decision to close Reserve Flying Schools the V.R. Social Club bar at Cambridge Aerodrome is to shut. It provided recreational facilities for R.A.F. Reservists in training and since 1947 has hosted an annual ball and Christmas party. Many members loaned Squadron crests to decorate the Club premises and a fine array of silver and pewter pots adorn the bar shelves; these should now be reclaimed. . The lounge, television room and billiards room will still be available for use by Reservists until the end of April.

1954 03 19

At Oakington RAF station one of the runways is being re-surfaced with a one-inch topping of asphalt – good for 10 or 15 years even with the harsh treatment it will get with the jet engines of the Vampire T-11s which are due when the flying school re-opens at Easter. Taxpayers will be glad to hear that little is being wasted on the job – even the old runway surfacing is being used for the working course on new landing strips at other airfields

1954 06 04

Would-be pilots can now learn to fly for as little as ten shillings a week. A scheme introduced by Cambridge Aero Club now brings the cost within the reach of most pockets. For an initial payment of £1 plus the weekly amount they can then carry out one and a half hours flying in a four-week period, or more if they pay extra. The Club has been operating continuously – except war years – since 1929 and offers training facilities for the Student Private and Commercial Pilots' licences including instrument and night flying

1954 05 14

The pilot of an R.A.F. Swift jet aircraft from Waterbeach airfield was killed when it crashed within 200 yards of a group of houses in Stretham fen. Had the blast from the aircraft, which exploded, gone in the direction of the houses then wreckage would most certainly have struck them. As it was pieces of the aircraft were strewn in a half circle for about 200 yards. Eye-witness Mr Leslie Pinion said: "the plane dived straight down in the field and exploded". It left a crater about 15 feet deep. Waterbeach was the first unit to be equipped with Swift jet fighters and the lightning-fast silver machines with their distinctive swept-back wings have become a familiar sight.

1954 05 21

People passing Cambridge airport were intrigued to see the arrival of a German-built ultra-light aircraft, the Zaunkoenig. The tiny plane which can land and take off from the proverbial sixpence and is virtually 'unstallable' is the only survivor of a group of ten; the others were destroyed in Germany towards the end of the war. It is present on loan to the Cambridge Private Flying Group, but the members hope to make it their property. With a cruising speed of only 56 mph it is an ideal aerial runabout and can be hired out for a mere 30 shillings an hour.

1954 06 04

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1954 06 25

RAF authorities are investigating reports that two parachutes were seen to appear from a Canberra jet bomber shortly before it crashed in a sugar beet field near Six Mile Bottom. It had taken off from Bassingbourn a few minutes before. The three crew, who include a Royston man, have been reported as missing believed killed but only one body has yet been found. Mystery surrounds the crash but the finding of the aircraft's cockpit canopy in the Melbourn area indicates it might have become detached and been the cause of the accident. The plane hurtled into the ground in a field half-a-mile from the railway and made a hole about 40 feet deep, the sides of which collapsed almost burying the aircraft.

1954 08 16

The pilot of an RAF Vampire jet trainer from Oakington airfield was killed when his plane crashed into a cornfield at Dry Drayton. He succeeded in missing 18 Council houses and women picking fruit in a nearby orchard before the plane – smoke pouring from its tail – crashed into a field off the Oakington Road. It is thought the pilot might have been attempting to make a forced landing and crashed through a hedge before skidding along the ground for some distance. The engine and tail-plane were 40 yards apart but still intact after the crash CDN 16.8.1954

1954 08 28

Just after 9.30 on Thursday evening a CDN reporter was cycling along Victoria Road, Cambridge when suddenly a green coloured ball of light flashed over at great speed in the direction of Huntingdon. At the same moment his cycle developed all kinds of mechanical troubles. Wheels began

to creak and groan and the chain parted company with the rear cogs. Then on Friday a lady at our Saffron Walden office asked 'Did you see the flying saucer last night', saying she too saw a light in the sky, this time red in colour, travelling fast towards Cambridge. Shortly afterwards her television had failed. CDN 28.8.1954

1954 08 31

Was it a flying saucer or an ice-blue star-shaped machine that flashed across the Cambridge sky? The 'star' description comes from Herbert Finbow who said: "My wife and I were taking the dog for a walk when we saw 'the thing' flash across the sky near our home. It was like a huge star, apparently mechanical and similar to the wartime 'doodle-bug' glow before it fell. We heard a swish as it passed overhead". The 'ice-blue' description completed the colour-trio for the object: it was reported green over Cambridge and red over Saffron Walden CDN 31.8.1954

1954 09 20

A perfect black smoke ring topped by a mushroom cloud hung in the air over a bombed fort hit by Meteors highlighted Waterbeach 'Battle of Britain' Saturday. Small boys clutching identification manuals pestered their less knowledgeable fathers with technical questions or casually recognised jet planes and provided exact data for ignorant mothers. They elbowed their ways into the cockpits of fighters on display – except the Swift, which was closely guarded. A mass scramble split the eardrums as the jets roared down the runway in pairs but most impressive was the tight formation flying of the modern fighters at low level. Stateliest aircraft were the long-range submarine killer Shackletons while 'Old Faithful', the Vampire V flew some skilful aerobatics. 20.9.1954

1954 09 21

A man was killed when two 1,000-lb bombs exploded at RAF Marham. The bombs were being moved in preparation for an exercise when they fell from a trailer he was towing with a tractor. Five other airmen were injured and nine Canberra twin-jet bombers and one Anson aircraft were damaged. Eight of the Canberras can be repaired on the station.

1954 09 27

A 78-year-old gardener was cycling across the perimeter track at Oakington RAF Station when he was struck by a Vampire jet plane that was taxi-ing before take-off. The pilot saw the cyclist crossing the dispersal area when travelling at 25 mph. He assumed the man would look to see if anything was coming and would certainly hear the plane. It was a rule that aircraft always had the right of way. He added: "the cyclist took a 90 degrees turn towards me suddenly. I turned slightly to the right and my left wing caught his neck". All employees were required to sign a document that under no circumstances could claims be made against the Air Ministry in the event of accidents to and from work.

1954 10 22

The Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, watched excitedly as a Hunter aircraft did a 705 mph speed run 50 feet above him at Duxford. Without a word the phantom-like plane dived over the Emperor, and then came its booming report which clearly startled him. Earlier he had inspected a Spitfire used in the Battle of Britain but was far more interested in a modern Meteor; he insisted on climbing into the machine and asked many questions. After the display and much saluting and handshakes, the Emperor, a quiet and retiring figure, got into his car and headed for the Imperial Ethiopian Embassy.

1954 11 09

British military officers and civilian personnel from the Lakenheath air base witnessed a 'Skysweeper' firing demonstration at Weybourne range, Norfolk. This is the U.S. army's largest calibre automatic anti-aircraft artillery weapon – an artillery machine gun. It is the first weapon with radar, computer and gun on one carriage with fully integrated gun and fire control. The units are designed to spot and track with radar and aim and fire the gun semi-automatically at enemy aircraft flying near-sonic speeds at low and medium altitudes. CDN 9.11.1954

1954 12 03

A Vampire jet aircraft from RAF Oakington attempting to land on a disused runway at Bourn aerodrome overshot and crashed across the main Cambridge to St Neots Road. It landed in a field and burst into flames. The pilot managed to pull himself clear of the wreckage suffering from severe burns and was given first aid by Sister Joan Webb of the Medical Research Department of Bourn Pest Control. All that was recognisable of the wreckage was the tail assembly and jet engine propulsion unit. The pavement on the other side of the road was smashed and crumpled by the impact when the plane crashed. CDN 3.12.1954

1955 02 02

Flames shot 30 feet into the air as a Vampire Jet aircraft crashed in Landbeach, narrowly missing the church, school and rectory. Villagers crowded round the Rectory paddock where the plane fell. The crash stopped at meeting of the Women's Institute in the Rectory; the ladies ran out and saw the planes in flames but when they found they could not help they resumed their meeting. The body of the pilot was found almost at the door of the church, about 50 yards from the aircraft. 55 02 02a

1955 02 16

A Vampire jet aircraft on a training flight from Oakington crashed and exploded at Comberton, killing the pilot. Flaming twisted mangled parts of the plane carpeted a 500 yards radius, a bullock was badly injured and chickens were killed. A car was badly damaged. Pieces of the plane wreckage went through the roof of the kitchen of Fox's bridge Farmhouse where the farmer's wife was working. She described the noise as a 'terrific tornado' and flung herself down for safety. She tried to dial 999 but the telephone wires had been cut by the crashing aircraft. 55 02 16a

1955 02 16

A Meteor jet aircraft made a successful forced landing at Newmarket. The pilot informed his companion that he had run out of fuel and had to attempt a landing. He missed the racecourse runway at his first approach and was compelled to land on the Heath. The landing was perfect and the aircraft came to a halt at the finishing post on the Rowley Mile course, immediately opposite the photo-finish camera. A guard was mounted round the plane all night and the pilot took off next morning. 55 02 16b

1955 03 11

Cambridge University Airborne Club organised a parachute jump from a balloon on the Pemberton Estate. In the first cage for jumping, which took place from the usual height of 800 feet, were four regular soldiers; they were followed by 28 members of the Airborne Club in drops of five, all of whom were attached to regiments of the 16th Parachute Division, Territorial Army. The wind was quite sharp and gusty and most of those who landed were dragged yards by their inflated canopies. Quite a crowd of spectators gathered to watch the descents and many cars and lorries were drawn up on the Trumpington Road. All ended happily, with a cup of tea. 55 03 11

1955 08 04

Men of the 629 Airborne Light Regiment R.A.T.A., formerly known as the "Cambridgeshires", have completed their first parachute training course. In just two weeks the men who come from all walks of life have been transformed into fully-fledged parachutists and 140 of the volunteers will receive their wings. They include Captain L.S. Brown who as headmaster of the Chesterton School had decided to set the boys an example. But he landed awkwardly and became a visitor to the therapy centre for treatment. 55 08 04a

1955 08 30

Wings Day gave a memorable send-off to the 629 (Cambridgeshire) Parachute Light Regiment R.A. (T.A.) regiment in its new role. The first presentation was to its Commanding Officer, Lt.-Col. J.G.A. Beckett whilst Major J.H. Sanders, at the age of 52, completed the course along with his younger colleagues. Thirty of the new parachutists will stage a mock attack at Duxford on Battle of Britain Sunday. 55 08 30 & a

1955 09 03

Fireworks and flying saucers celebrated the opening of the new showrooms of H.W. Peak in King Street, Cambridge. Giant rockets were released from the roof of the floodlit and gaily decorated building and the city was 'bombed' with balloons released from aircraft. Each contained a numbered card and winners will share in the distribution of £200 worth of furniture. 55 09 03

1955 09 09

A scroll authorising personnel of RAF Wyton to march through Huntingdon on ceremonial occasions with bayonets fixed, colours flying, drums beating and bands playing was presented to the Commanding Officer during celebrations to mark the 750th anniversary of the granting of the town's first royal charter. A parade of 700 officers and men headed by the Central Band of the Royal Air Force marched past as 12 Canberras and two Valiants flew overhead in salute. 55 09 09a & b

1955 09 10

Pye demonstrated their new aircraft instrument landing system with a series of flights in Dakotas between Cambridge and the De Havilland works at Hatfield. The trips are also open to factory staff so they can see how the system allows the pilot to land without having to be 'talked down' from the ground. They had barely time to unfasten the seat belts, say 'Thank you' to the air hostess for packets of 20 cigarettes and the treble scotches before a loudspeaker commentary was started on the landing. 55 09 10a-b

1955 09 13

A 'flying saucer' object – one of which has been seen in the vicinity recently – will make an appearance at the Battle of Britain Show at R.A.F. Debden along with Hunters, Sabres and Shackletons. The Valiant and Vulcan 'V' bombers will also fly over. There will be an attack by Meteor fighter-bombers and the R.A.F. Regiment will deal with the 'flying saucer'. There are strong rumours that 'Dan Dare, Special Agent' will help the Regiment. 55 09 13

1955 09 30

When a Hawker Hunter jet fighter crash-landed near Upware pumping station the pilot was pulled from the aircraft and taken to the Ely RAF Hospital by a helicopter which had taken off from Waterbeach airfield carrying the Station Commander, Gp Capt Chackfield, to the scene of the crash. Units from Cambs and Fordham fire brigades were called but the aircraft did not catch fire. 55 09 30a

55 10 12

King Feisal of Iraq paid a private visit to Cambridge as the guest of the Vice-Chancellor of the University. He arrived late because of fog and after lunching at Christ's College visited the Wren Library at Trinity and the Fitzwilliam Museum. He then travelled to Marshall's airfield where he displayed keen interest in a Venom IV jet aircraft and the Comet jet and Viscount turboprop airliners. In the Royal party was Mr Tariq Al Askari who was at Cambridge as a student. 55 10 12b

1955 11 15

A Vampire jet from RAF Oakington skimmed over Rampton before crash-landing in a field. The pilot managed to miss council houses and touched down, bouncing over and ditch and hedge before coming to rest in an orchard. Several villagers did not hear any explosion and only realised a plane had crashed when they saw the flames. 55 11 15

1956

First season of operations of independent airline from Cambridge airport [

1956 01 05

A practice bomb, inadvertently released from an American B47 bomber, fell in a ploughed field near Newport and buried itself in a crater 15 feet deep and 20 feet wide. It caused hundreds of pounds worth of damage to Biggs' nurseries; one man was wounded when sheets of glass were blown out and

five other men ran clear. The crater was surrounded by large sheets of metal which was burned and twisted and scattered over a wide area. A lorry-load of RAF men wearing bow ties and white gloves with Wellington boots collected the fragments and men with picks and shovels removed a large container from the bottom of the crater. 56 01 05

1956 03 06

A captive balloon will be used for parachute jumping at Trumpington. Although intended primarily for members of the University Parachute Club, 50 'chutes have been allotted to the Cambridgeshire Regiment Parachute Light Regiment. All men now have a reserve parachute strapped to his middle as a second line of defence 56 03 06e

1956 03 13

Marshall's Flying School were granted permission to double the width of the 'hard land strip' on the airfield and extend it from the boundary of Coldham's Lane to the boundary of Teversham Road provided they erect suitable fences to prevent the possibility of jet slipstreams from reaching the roads. However planners feel the aerodrome is wrongly sited adjoining a residential area and that no further development should be given approval. 56 03 13a

1956 03 29

Waterbeach airfield to receive standard, history 56 squadron 56 03 29

1956 04 26

A Central School girl claims to have seen a flying saucer over Milton and Impington. "It came towards me at a very fast rate and disappeared back in the direction it had come. There were little windows all round it", she said. Asked whether it could have been the airborne elephant from Bertram Mills circus straying slightly off course she laughed and said "That is impossible". Nothing would shake her belief that this was a flying saucer. 56 04 26b

1956 05 24

Princess Alexandra was fascinated by a close-up view of a Vampire training aircraft when she visited RAF Oakington Flying Training Command Station and asked if she could have a ride. She burst into laughter at the sight of the pilot wearing the latest type of space-man crash helmet. It was her first visit to the Royal Air Force and she was Reviewing Officer at a passing-out parade for 15 newly-qualified pilots. 56 05 24a b c

1956 06 06

The pilot of a Mark 5 Vampire training jet based at R.A.F. Oakington was forced to bale out of his machine while flying over Littleport. He landed safely in Camel Road and the plane crashed at the side of a cornfield at Black Bank, Lt Downham causing a crater 15 feet deep. Norah Garner and Neville Constable ran to the wreckage and could see there was no one in it. The nose was sticking up in the air. 56 06 06a

1956 06 16

The first Cambridge Committee for National Savings was formed in December 1916 and two of the first workers still living are R.P. Thorne and Mrs Widdison. In 1919 the Chairman was persuaded by the head of the Cambridge School of Flying to drop six War Bonds together with lots of leaflets from a low-flying aircraft. He suffered only temporary discomforts from stunt flying in the open type of aircraft of those days. 56 06 16

1956 07 06

An ancient certificate will stir memories of older readers who remember the Mammoth Shows. It was presented to Alphonso Smith, a boot and shoe maker, and records that he ascended in balloon 'Enchantress' from Cambridge on August 7th 1911 and descended at Exning one hour later. It is signed by Percival Spencer, aeronaut of Highbury whose other activities included parachute descents and airship flying. 56 07 06a

1956 07 17

Distinguished statesmen gathered at the Madingley American Cemetery for the dedication of the outstandingly beautiful chapel. There were messages from the Queen and President Eisenhower whose wife was amongst the guests. Air Chief Marshal 'Bomber' Harris said it marked the centre of the area from which American bombing planes operated during the war. Nearly 90,000 American Servicemen who lost their lives had been commemorated by the chapel. 56 07 17 & a

1956 07 28

All four members of the crew of an American B.47 strato-jet were killed when it crashed and caught fire at Lakenheath air base while practising landings and take-offs. American fire-fighters were joined by the Mildenhall Fire Service in extinguishing the blaze and personnel working in buildings nearby were evacuated because of the danger of fuel tanks exploding. The B.47 is a swept-wing medium bomber designed to carry a bomb load of 20,000 lbs and can carry an Atomic Bomb. 56 07 28a. An American newspaper, the 'Omaha World-Herald' has reported that after a B-47 bomber crashed at Lakenheath RAF station in 1956 flaming fuel pouring from the ruptured tanks engulfed a building containing three nuclear bombs. If they had exploded radioactive material would have been showered over a large area. But a major accident was averted when the base Fire Chief ignored the burning bomber and its four-man crew and concentrated on dousing the flames surrounding the nuclear storage building. The incident was kept secret, as the British people had not been told that nuclear bombs were being kept in the U.K. 56 08 28a

1956 08 31

At Oakington airfield there is a station cinema, the NAAFI provides television and haircuts and shoe repairs are free. A civilian tailor comes every week to fit the men for their uniforms and pyjamas are part of the Service issue. There is one full armed parade a month but most time is devoted to teaching young pilots to fly. It has enough ground staff for a large village since it takes from 50 to 80 people to keep one plane in the air, most are fitters and mechanics who tend the Vampires 56 08 31d & e

1956 09 17

Thousands of visitors to the Battle of Britain airshow at RAF Waterbeach saw Peter Twiss demonstrate the Fairey F.D.2 high speed research aircraft in which he set up the world air speed record of 1,132 mph. Individual aerobatics displays came from Vampire, Meteor, Hunter, Provost and Chipmunk aircraft and members of the Cambridgeshire Regiment, T.A., demonstrated parachuting from a balloon. 56 09 17 & a

1956 09 29

The pilot and navigator of a Venom night fighter taking part in the Air Defence Exercise, 'Stronghold', were killed when it crashed in a sugar beet field near Sutton. Portions of the aircraft were strewn over a large area and flames were still visible in the bottom of a large crater some times later. 56 09 29a

An inquest on a sergeant at RAF Stradishall heard that a Meteor jet aircraft had returned to the arming-up area after a firing sortie with a stoppage in one gun. The detonating mechanism had jammed with a live round in the chamber and there was no response when the trigger was pulled. The gun had been taken to the safety range and was being worked on when an explosion occurred, killing him instantaneously. 57 01 25

1957 02 01

Cambridge was visited this week by a flying saucer that appeared to be about 500 feet above the ground, says a reader from Fanshawe Road. It had a dome-shaped structure on top with a series of windows around the edge, one of which was blacked out while the base glowed with a vivid green fluorescent colour that seemed to be bubbling. He contacted the University Observatory who says it might have been a meteor. 57 02 01a [3,9,7,1]

1957 02 18

A farmer from Craft Hill Farm, Dry Drayton probably saved the life of a pilot who crashed in a Vampire jet aircraft in a field. He gave first aid to the airman who'd been thrown from the wreckage and was unconscious. He removed his harness, helmet, leggings and the watch from the pilot's swollen and discoloured arm. Then when an ambulance, a Jeep and a fire engine became bogged down he got a tractor and pulled them out. If the plane had exploded he'd have been blown sky high. 57 02 18

1957 03 12

Hundreds of aviation enthusiasts both young and old crowded into the Cambridge University Engineering Laboratories for the inaugural meeting of the Cambridge branch of the Royal Aeronautical Society. Some people claimed that aircraft as we knew them were on the way out, but the next 25 years will see great developments in flying and this country will stay in the forefront of this development, they were told. 57 03 12

1957 07 01

The rector of St Peter's Church, Duxford, sat on the Coronation seat on the green with a top hat for donations. RAF men in full flying kit arrived in the station fire engine, bowed low and made their contributions. They then received a certificate granting them permission "to fly Discreetly and Warily over ye precincts of ye Holy Shrine of St Peter's without incurring ye customary Curse of Anathema of ye church". 57 07 01b

1957 08 09

Cambridge residents watched a short aerobatics display and heard a radio commentary by the pilot of the aircraft at the same time. It was the first such broadcast. The commentator was Raymond Baxter, the aircraft a Tiger Moth of the Cambridge Private Flying Group. This was formed in 1953 to bring private flying within the reach of the man in the street. One of the lady members, Betty Willink, hopes to qualify for her Private Pilot's licence soon. 57 08 09

1958 03 17

A Hawker Hunter jet aircraft from RAF Waterbeach crashed into a ploughed field at Hinton Hall, Haddenham. It was seen to dive 'straight into the ground' and an explosion followed the impact. The pilot baled out and landed at the back of some Council houses at Wilburton, 800 yards away. 58 03 17

1958 04 18

Two new aircraft have arrived at Marshall's. One is a Druine Turbulent ultra-light monoplane belonging to Miss Joan Short. Its flying qualities are good and fuel consumption around 1.75 gallons per hour at a cruising speed of 70 knots. The other is a Jackaroo, a conversion of the de Havilland Tiger Moth to an enclosed four-seater. The dual-control version sells at £1,095. 58 04 18

1958 04 28

The Duchess of Kent visited RAF Waterbeach to present it with its Standard, the greatest honour to be bestowed on 56 Fighter Squadron in its lengthy history. It is awarded only to squadrons of 25 years' standing or with a history of special outstanding operations. Afterwards she had difficulty signing the visitors' book because of cold fingers; the signature looks a little indistinct and shaky 56 04 28a

1958 06 13

A B45 Tornado light bomber crashed almost immediately after taking off on an unauthorised flight from the USAF base at Alconbury. The man flying the aircraft, who was killed, was a mechanic who had had no flight training. Wreckage from the aircraft blocked the main railway line at Abbots Ripton. The incident occurred ten minutes after a USAF jet trainer, also from Alconbury, and an RAF Canberra bomber collided in mid-air and crashed near Spaldwick. 58 06 13

1958 06 24

The Duke of Edinburgh visited RAF Wyton for his first flight in an operational H-bomber. He was given a secret briefing, saw a Megaton bomb then drove to the dispersal point to give the signal for a practice 'scramble' of five Valiants. Finally he flew to Farnborough in the co-pilot's seat of a Vulcan, watching the operational techniques at first hand. 58 06 24

1958 08 19

RAF Waterbeach has the rare distinction of holding two squadron standards. They are hard-won honours: not only must the units have outstanding records but they must have 25 years operational service. One is No.25, the oldest-established night fighter squadron in the world, formed at Melrose in 1915, and the first to be jet-equipped in 1954. The other is no.56 which destroyed more than 150 enemy aircraft during the last war. 58 08 19 & 19a

1958 08 22

A portable short-range guided missile intended to be used against armoured vehicles has been produced by Pye Limited. It incorporates rocket motors with a new jet steerage system and is guided to its target by thin wires which carry signals from a controller's "joystick". It can be fitted with periscopic binoculars which switch from low to high-powered magnification as the missile travels away from the launcher. Many successful test firings have taken place and it can go into production on receipt of orders. 58 08 22c

1958 08 30

Bassingbourn RAF Station is destined to become the world's first jet bomber conversion unit. All RAF crews throughout the world operating bomber, long-range photographic reconnaissance and jet transport aircraft have undergone training there. Two years ago it formed a Canberra formation team, carrying out a complete routine of aerobatic flying and considered one of the finest ever produced. 58 08 30d

1958 11 14

Mrs Veronica Volkertz and Mrs Anne Duncan, two women who spent the war years ferrying aircraft of all types, flying more than 4,000 hours between them are now back at Marshall's Flying School – learning to become instructors. Both learned to fly under the short-lived Civil Air Guard scheme in 1939 when one could qualify for an A Licence for about £2.10.0. Nowadays the equivalent Private Pilot's Licence costs pupils around £100! 58 11 14

1958 12 05

Two airmen from Oakington airfield had miraculous escapes when their Vampire jet trainer crashed on the main railway line bordering the airfield and skidded 200 yards across a ploughed field. The plane had taken off from the main runway when its engine failed. It rapidly lost height and at 100 mph hit the main 'down' Cambridge-Huntingdon railway line, shedding its undercarriage before knocking down fences and coming to rest. Both lines were blocked for half an hour but workmen soon had the damage repaired. 58 12 05

1959 04 16

Looking like a gigantic cigar, a tarpaulin-covered 'Thor' rocket – minus its warhead of course – passed through Ely en route to the Mepal rocket base. The 90-foot transporter with pilot drivers at the rear to ensure negotiation of the highway, was escorted by the R.A.F. police. Preceding it, to clear the streets of all other traffic, were civil police. The 'Thor', produced in America, has a range of at least 1,500 miles. 59 04 16a

1959 04 23

The Air Ministry says the warning light on Ely Cathedral is no longer needed now that the airfield at Witchford is closed. Aircraft from Mildenhall are routed well above the height of the tower. But many people have been disturbed by extremely low-flying aircraft during the hours of darkness and US

aircraft might not be fully aware of the geography of the country. Many other cathedrals had lights on them and if there was the faintest possibility of danger they should be replaced. 59 04 23

1959 05 08

Cambridge University Gliding club – history – 59 05 08a

1959 05 15

US to build Atomic planes – 59 05 15

1959 05 20

The facilities for private flying and gliding in Cambridge are as good as those in many larger cities. At Cambridge Airport there exists a flying school, a flying group and a gliding club, and a few miles distant at Duxford another gliding club run by the R.A.F. Gliding and Soaring Association which caters for a limited number of civilians. In April 1935 the Cambridge University Gliding Club made its first flight field at Caxton Gibbet. A St Neots butcher, Tom Ayres, placed a field at their disposal and loaned them a barn for use as a hangar. (History) 59 05 20a & b & c & e

1959 07 09

Three members of the crew of a Canberra were killed when the aircraft crashed a few hundred yards from the runway at Bassingbourn R.A.F. station. It came down in a barley field near the main Royston-Huntingdon Road at about the same spot where another Canberra crashed a year ago. Thousands of gallons of foam gas and 120lbs of carbon dioxide were used by firemen in extinguishing the fire. 59 07 09

1959 10 02

More than 900 passengers flew from Cambridge to Jersey in Derby Airways' first season's operations. The aircraft used were 19-seat Marathons and Pullman DC-3s, a 36-seat luxury version of the well-proven Dakota. The extremely good flying weather, coupled with a high standard of aircraft serviceability enabled the service to operate with almost 100 per cent punctuality. An inclusive tour service between Cambridge and Ostend, which is only available to passengers booking hotel accommodation, was also successful. Applications have now been made to open similar services to Zurich, Barcelona, Pisa and Zagreb. 59 10 02a [5.12]

1959 10 03

RAF Oakington Meteor crash near Willingham – pics 59 10 03

1959 10 15

A Vampire jet trainer aircraft which was formation flying with three others ploughed through electricity cables before crashing on its back in a field at Meadow Farm near Elsworth. Thousands of gallons of foam were poured on the wreckage by members of the Oakington RAF Station Fire Brigade and spectators were told to keep well clear as one of the ejector seats in the aircraft had not gone off and bare electricity cables were smouldering and sparking in the stubble. 59 10 15b

1959 10 16

A meeting was held to discuss noise problems in connection with the F-100 Super Sabre jet fighter-bombers which are coming from Europe to Lakenheath. They are big, noisy aircraft using afterburners on take-off which can give the impression of the supersonic boom. Villages on the periphery of the airfield have suffered aircraft noise problems for years and are resigned to it. 59 10 16d

1959 10 20

A Vampire jet trainer aircraft which was formation flying with three others ploughed through electricity cables before crashing on its back in a field at Meadow Farm near Elsworth. Thousands of gallons of foam were poured on the wreckage by members of the Oakington RAF Station Fire Brigade and spectators were told to keep well clear as one of the ejector seats in the aircraft had not

gone off and bare electricity cables were smouldering and sparking in the stubble 59 10 15b Vampire crash near Conington inquest – 59 10 20

1959 11 03

Oakington plane crash – 59 11 03

1959 12 27

Britain's first gyrocopter has been built by an Ely officer, Wing-Commander Ken Wallis, who is serving at RAF Stanmore. It takes off in less than 100 yards and cruises at 80 mph. A second, much-improved version is now in the pipeline. Flying and building aeroplanes is a family tradition for in 1909 his father made a 'Wallbro' monoplane and his cousin, B.P. Wallis, is chief flying instructor at Marshall's Flying School 59 12 27b

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 01 18

Oakington railway station is one of the busiest in the area: 80 trains pass daily, 14 of them stopping passenger trains. However many RAF passengers from Oakington airfield find it easier to reach their living quarters from Long Stanton station and services can be disrupted by plane crashes. Large quantities of fruit are still sent 'up North' but there is increasing competition from road haulage firms. One farmer says he prefers the rail as the fresh air blowing through the trucks helps to keep the fruit fresh. But the station suffered when a large local farming concern changed hands and nearly 700 tons of sugar beet was not grown. 60 01 18a & b

1960 03 11

MP Major Legge-Bourke spoke of the rocket base at Mepal. It had a higher proportion of NCOs as against other ranks. There were plenty of first class warrant officers but practically no ordinary aircraft men. There was only one on the base when he visited. He felt very sorry for the fellow surrounded by so many stripes. The Under-Secretary of State agreed: he had never seen so many sergeants in one place in his whole life. If all bases were as cold and constituencies as cold as the Isle of Ely then he was sorry for the young chaps who have to stay there day and night looking after the installations. But morale was extremely high. 60 03 11a

1960 05 03

Passengers can now fly from Cambridge to almost anywhere in the world after Customs made available facilities for checking passports and luggage at the airport. Three large buildings are being converted into comfortable passenger transit, baggage and customs halls in readiness for the holiday rush. Marshall's have installed specialised electronic equipment and hope to develop it into the largest civil flying field in Eastern England. They also hope to capture the valuable trade of US service personnel from nearby bases to the Continent 60 05 03a [5.13]

1960 05 20

The remains of a large Stirling bomber which crashed just outside Icklingham during the last war, loaded with incendiary bombs, are now being unearthed by a team of RAF experts. The area is wired off and notices saying 'Danger. Unexploded Bombs' erected in the field. There are not many large pieces of the bomber left, as it exploded on crashing, but 20 live bombs and 1,000 rounds of ammunition have been recovered. They will be detonated on site when the work is completed. Things have been made more difficult with the large quantities of phosphuretted earth in the pit which can cause a nasty and painful burn. 60 05 20

1960 06 17

Direct and easy air travel to the Continent from Cambridge Airport is now possible for holidaymakers and businessmen as Airline operators and travel agents have taken advantage of the granting of customs facilities. Scheduled and chartered flights together with all-inclusive air tours will be available this summer, eliminating time-wasting journeys to London. The development of an

international airport is also important to University undergraduates as well as hundreds of students taking exchange summer courses at the colleges 60 06 17c

1960 07 08

For a long time the Hunt family, who work on Common Farm at Comberton Road, Hardwick, have lived in fear of low flying jet aircraft crashing near their white painted cottage. Late yesterday afternoon two RAD planes collided in mid-air, killing eight young fliers and scattering blazing wreckage over a wide area. One, a Vickers Varsity, plummeted to earth only a few hundred yards from the cottage, the other came down in a bean field two miles away. Victor Hunt said: "We have been expecting this for a long time. The planes come so low my son can see the dials on their instruments and the pilots even wave to him" 60 07 08b

1960 08 13

Duxford villagers complained of noise from the aerodrome. Shirley Rooke, whose firm makes tallow, grease and fertilisers, often has to make three telephone calls for one message as she can't hear a word the other person is saying. The chemical works, known locally as the 'glue factory' has a chimney 50 feet in height and aircraft have to tip their wings to avoid hitting it. Jettisoned fuel tanks cause damage while vibrations draw the rivets from roofing tiles and crack plaster in bungalows. The RAF says they try to avoid excessive noise on Sundays during church services. 60 08 13

1960 08 24

A young Cambridge businessman has started a contract-hire scheme for light aircraft. Anyone who can fly a plane can hire one of four Austers from Grantair of Grantchester for a day, week or longer. Some Oxford University students recently flew one to Ghana; their trip proved profitable for they have been offered executive jobs in the newly-formed Ghanaian Air Force. Another plane is giving holidaymakers joy rides off an improvised landing strip on Blackpool beach. The firm also have an aerial taxi service and plan to import kits of special ultra-light aircraft from France so do-it-yourself pilots can build their own planes. 60 08 24

1960 08 31

Next week 100 American children at an US Air Force base will walk into their brand-new classrooms just 100 yards from a giant concrete runway used by 1,000 m.p.h. atom-carrying jet fighter aircraft. Lakenheath base school will provide full educational facilities for nearly 1,400 pupils from nursery age right up to teenagers. It is part of a huge new scheme to provide 'right through' education for the children of military and civilian personnel stationed at bases throughout NATO 60 08 31

1960 09 09

Just a year ago the USAF base at RAF Alconbury became the headquarters of the 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing and nearly 7,000 Americans moved in. The station has its own bank and post office, a barber and beauty parlour, a laundry and motor maintenance department as well as a dispensary, food stores and clothes shop. There is a bowling alley, soccer and baseball pitches. A cinema, hobby shop and community centre provide off-duty means of entertainment, there is a well-stocked library and a base chapel. Houses include all the latest amenities with refrigerators, washing and drying machines, sink units and electric cookers. 60 09 09d e f

1960 09 09

RAF Waterbeach visited by Austrian minister of defence – 60 09 09g

1960 09 23

University Gliding Club celebrate jubilee – when formed in 1935 they used a horse to retrieve aircraft – 60 09 23e

1960 11 04

Cambridge University Air Squadron has six little Chipmunk trainers with nine experienced full-time RAF instructors. Every facet of flying is covered and when the examinations and tests have been

passed students are the proud possessors of their pilot's "wings". As an additional attraction each receives a £35 bounty at the end of each year to say nothing of the six shillings a day pay for each complete day's training. Trainees can resign at short notice if they feel their academic studies are suffering and only a very small percentage enter the RAF 60 11 04c

1960 12 09

Five incendiary and three practice bombs were recently unearthed during digging operations at Mepal airfield, a few hundred yards from the main entrance to one of East Anglia's Thor rocket bases. It brings the total find during the three weeks in which an RAF Feltwell bomb disposal squad has been at work up to 18 bombs or Mills markers. In addition about 200 other miscellaneous items of an explosive nature have been discovered, mostly bullets. The rocket base was not in danger at any time: the biggest threat would have been death to any person in the immediate vicinity should the bombs have exploded 60 12 09b

1960 12 16

Amongst those working on Christmas Day will be 30 men at RAF Oakington. Being a training school and operational station there must be a handful of men to tend the sick and guard the vital installations on the base. They will have a six-course Christmas dinner served by officers and senior NCOs plus free beer and cigarettes. They can then relax with a book or in front of the television, hoping that no crises will arise to disturb their peace. But if it does there are an additional 150 men in the near vicinity who can be called in for reinforcements. 60 12 16a

1961 01 06

Cambridge University Gliding Club has a membership of more than 350, only half of whom are members of the University. They include Prince William of Gloucester, who is studying engineering. The instructors include John Hulme who was former holder of the UK record for a distance flight and Mrs Ann-Mari Neumann, a school teacher. Mr Bryce Smith, a civil engineer, is one of the Club's tug pilots. He says you can't glide without a team of people to help but you must be an individual to be successful at soaring. 61 01 06

1961 03 06

Duxford airfield, the home of RAF fighter planes since the First World War, is to close as a Fighter Command base and will probably be administered from Waterbeach. It has a tremendous history but was built for bi-plane use and since it cannot be expanded any further it must be sacrificed in an age of supersonic aircraft. The 130 married quarters will continue to be used and the buildings and hangars become storage and support units. It will remain as a front line fighter base through 1961 until the closure is completed 61 03 06a

1961 03 08

RAF Duxford dying of old age – 61 03 08

1961 04 26

An Old Persean, 23-year-old Flying Officer Peter Neville Perry from Doddington, became the youngest RAF pilot ever to assume command of a V-bomber when he took of in a Valiant from RAF Honington. Perry trained at RAF Oakington before taking a captain's course for the most promising and ambitious student pilots. Previously only pilots with 15 years flying experience have been considered for the job. Mr Stubbs, Headmaster of the Perse, said he had a good academic record and was never hasty: he would think things out carefully before making a decision. 61 04 26c

1961 05 15

The Armed Forces Day Open House and Air Show at Alconbury will feature the U.S. Army's Nike air defence and Hawk missiles alongside the R.A.F. 'Blood Hound'. Displays will include radiation protection suits and detection units, a mobile medical unit, survival equipment and flying gear together with a cartridge ejection system and a cutaway jet engine. The flying show will include T-33, F-101 and RB-66 aircraft together with a flypast of RAF Victor, Valiant, Vulcan, Comet, Britannia

and Shackletons. Guests will also be able to view a typical set of family quarters and buy pop-corn, doughnuts and 'hot dogs' 61 05 15a

1961 05 29

A leading RAF glider expert, Ernest Walter Clarke of Duxford, was killed when his sail plane broke up in the air over Fen Ditton – 61 05 29

1961 06 02

There are three runways at RAF Lakenheath but only one is usable. After takeoff the F-100 jets pass over Brandon at 4,000 feet before climbing to pass south of Lowestoft. This is a disturbance and a nuisance and has caused many complaints. Now the US Air Force are making a concentrated effort to reduce the noise with a new jet engine test cell with earth revetments and blast deflectors 61 06 02

1961 06 19

A workman had an amazing escape from death when an American F-100 Super Sabre jet fighter crashed less than ten yards from him, blowing a hole 15 feet deep in the centre of the main Sawston-Babraham Road. The blast of the exploding aircraft, which broke windows 200 yards away, picked him up and threw him into a field. The plane narrowly missed the Simplex dairy and farming equipment factory and a large housing estate. The pilot ejected and landed in the grounds of Pampisford Hall 61 06 19

1961 06 30

The number '22' has been a feature of life at Cambridge Airport for some time. In the immediate pre-war years No.22 Elementary and Reserve Flying and Training School was based there; during the war it became No.22 Elementary Flying Training School and with the return of peace Cambridge became home of No.22 Reserve Flying School. Now Cambridge Private Flying Group has included the number in its blazer badge. It was formed in 1953 by local businessmen John Peak who owned a Gemini, John Chapman with a Chrislea Ace, G.P. Reece (a Proctor) and Reg Marsh with his Taylorcraft Plus D. They are the 22nd group of the Popular Flying Association 61 06 30f

1961 07 05

A visitor to the Royal Show asked if he could park on the playing field of Fawcett School in Alpha Terrace, Trumpington, less than a mile from the showground. But the headmaster told him he could not. So he climbed back into the cockpit of his plane and took off with a 30 yard run. The machine had circled low before landing and Mr F.N. Walker thought it had made a forced landing. But the pilot, who was wearing a Royal Society member's badge, jumped down and asked if he could leave the plane there while he went to the Show. 61 07 05

1961 07 06

Queen Mother visits Royal Show by helicopter – 61 07 06

1961 08 18

The Dragon Rapide, one of the most popular types of aircraft from de Havilland, is disappearing from the local scene. Until recently Marshall's Flying Services used a fleet of four to operate charter services for jockeys and trainers from Newmarket. Built between 1934 and 1946 they are economical to operate and maintain and even now are a common sight. Some firms use them as executive machines while others still plod the air routes. Marshall's has not entirely said farewell to the bi-plane era: they still have five Tiger Moths for instructional flying 61 08 18

1961 11 22

RAF Anson aircraft crashes at West Row – 61 11 22a

1961 11 28

Two young fliers from RAF Waterbeach were given lifts by passing motorists when they landed safely by parachute after abandoning their Javelin jet fighter-interceptor aircraft high over

Cambridgeshire. The 700 mph aircraft plunged into a field on Rectory Farm at Fox End Balsham and blew up, scattering wreckage over a wide area. Crash investigation work was hampered as live ammunition from the aircraft's canons was lying in the thick mud of the field where it crashed. 61 11 28

1962 01 12

How Cambridge caters for would-be pilots – Marshall's flying school, University Gliding Club & Royal Aeronautical Society – 62 01 12b

1962 02 23

The small puddle-jumping aeroplane is becoming part of the modern scene. Wing Commander K.H. Wallis, a member of the well-known Ely family, imported a Benson autogyro in 1957 and has carried out an intensive modification programme. The result is a practical single seat machine known as the Beagle-Wallis WA-116, far-removed from the original American design. It will leap into the air in about 25 yards and climb very steeply at over 1,000 feet per minute before landing n half the length of a tennis court 62 02 23e

1962 03 01

A young pilot escaped serious injury when he used his ejector seat at low level shortly before his Vampire jet aircraft crashed on the airfield at Graveley. 62 03 01

1962 04 23

Tiger Moth crashes at Caxton – 62 04 23b

1962 05 17

Royal Flying Corps history – feature – 62 05 17a

1962 08 22

A USAF faster-than-sound Super Sabre jet fighter from Lakenheath crashed into an unoccupied house at Stanton, near Bury St Edmunds. Two semi-detached houses in the village were set alight but no-one was hurt. Later the USAF said further reports indicated that four houses were damaged. A woman and baby in one house and a US officer, his wife and two children in another, narrowly escaped injury. The pilot, 1st Lieut John E. Malone had baled out when his engine stopped and landed safely. He was taken to hospital 62 08 22

1962 08 22

Two fliers parachuted to safety when their Hunting Jet Provost aircraft crashed into a corn field at Girton. It came down less than 100 yards from the spot where one of the first flying machines in the country force-landed 50 years ago. The same man who ran to the rescue of the pilot then was one of the few eye witnesses to the recent crash. He was 65-year-old Herbert Moore of Histon, a special constable in the County Police. The plane is believed to have been on a flight from the experimental centre at Boscombe Down 62 08 22

1962 11 16

The famous RAF fighter station at Hornchurch, Essex is to close. Originally known as Sutton's Farm it came into use as a base from which to combat the Zeppelin. The first patrol took place on October 13, 1915 and in 1916 Lieut Robinson gained the VC for bringing down the first airship. It was reconstructed as RAF Hornchurch in 1924. Spitfires flew continuously during the Battle of Britain although the Luftwaffe made regular attacks. But it was not suitable for jet aircraft and now the hangars and buildings will be sold with the rest of the land returned to its former owners. 62 11 16b

1962 12 03

Fifteen Britannia 102 airlines are being flown to Cambridge Airport by the British Overseas Airways Corporation to be put on show to prospective buyers. The turbo-prop aircraft are surplus to their needs and are being replaced with Comet 4 jetliners. The most likely customers will be small domestic and

international airlines looking for a medium range aircraft with a large seating capacity. Cambridge airport has been chosen as a convenient 'shop window' and will not be directly concerned in the sale of the aircraft 62 12 03

1962 12 10

An all-night vigil by CND members at the USAF airbase at Wethersfield near Saffron Walden was partly cancelled due to rain squalls and cold conditions. A mobile canteen which had been arranged to supply refreshments to the demonstrators did arrive but stood unused. However next day a public meeting was held on Wethersfield village green which was addressed by a member of the Committee of 100 before protestors marched to the base which is home to the 29th Tactical Fighter Wing flying Super Sabre fighter bombers 62 12 10

1963 01 31

U.F.O. group formed by Cambridge students – 63 01 31

1963 02 04

The Air Ministry was asked not to send any planes over Cambridge while the Marlowe Dramatic Society recorded the entire works of Shakespeare. George Rylands directed the project which started six years ago at the A.D.C. Noise interruptions were a constant worry: whenever a dog barked, a car backfired or rain fell on the roof, the recordings were spoiled and the actors had to begin again. After several summers they moved to a London recording company's studios. It was difficult getting the right sound effects for battles: one scene was the noise of supporters at a football match with cries of 'ref' judiciously removed. 63 02 04

1963 02 22

BBC engineers have been carrying out tests to find a suitable site for a relay booster television station in Cambridge. It follows a petition signed by 5,000 viewers that was organised by the Cambridge Radio and Television Retailers Association. The tests on Stourbridge Common involve the use of a barrage balloon which lifts a transmitting aerial to different heights. The signal is picked up by a mobile control room which travels around Cambridge testing reception in different areas – 63 02 22a

1963 05 02

The Aga Khan flew to Paris from Cambridge in a specially-chartered airliner after visiting Newmarket races to watch his horse race in the Two Thousand Guineas. But sadly he had no luck – Darannour was unplaced. Whilst waiting for his plane's clearance he was shown over a Bristol Freighter used to fly racehorses to Ireland and a new Beech Queen Air business aircraft. The Sales Manager of Marshall's said the Aga Khan was keenly interested in all types of executive aircraft. 63 05 02a

1963 05 25

A 1916 Sopwith Pup aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing in a field near Waterbeach. Police stopped traffic on the A10 while it was manhandled across the road on to the airfield 63 05 25a

1963 06 07

Stapleford man builds ultra-light monoplane in garage – 63 06 07c

1963 07 09

R.A.F. Waterbeach ceases to be a flying base in August and becomes a constructional depot with flying personnel replaced by teams from West Raynham and Wellesbourne Mountford. About 70 civilian workers will become redundant. Waterbeach is a pre-war airfield and there was considerable controversy when agricultural land was taken over by the R.A.F. for operations 63 07 09

1963 09 04

With eleven airfields within a 25-mile radius of Cambridge no-one is immune from the noise. But few experience such consistent interference with their sleep as the villagers of Cottenham, Girton, Histon and Dry Drayton which lie on a circuit used by planes of the flying school at Oakington where the night flying programme goes on until three o'clock in the morning. Residents have complained to MP Francis Pym but the Air Minister says the noisy Varsity aircraft cannot be moved to another station. 63 09 04

1963 09 04

A Canberra aircraft coming in to land at RAF Bassingbourn was forced to overshoot because of two motor lorries moving along the Old North Road across its path. 63 09 04a

1963 09 04

With eleven airfields within a 25-mile radius of Cambridge no-one is immune from the noise. But few experience such consistent interference with their sleep as the villagers of Cottenham, Girton, Histon and Dry Drayton which lie on a circuit used by planes of the flying school at Oakington where the night flying programme goes on until three o'clock in the morning. Residents have complained to MP Francis Pym but the Air Minister says the noisy Varsity aircraft cannot be moved to another station. 63 09 04

1963 09 20

New York is just eight hours away from Cambridge for many American families. Direct flights by the military version of the Boeing 707 jet liners or C118 transport aircraft are operated daily between Mildenhall airfield and McGuire Airfield on the outskirts of New York. About 80,000 travellers, most being wives and families of serving airmen, enter or leave the country through here; a large hotel has been built for passengers catching an early flight with nearly 5,000 accommodated there each month. 63 09 20

1963 09 20

The 5,000 m.p.h. rocket missiles which once stood on remote sites such as Mepal airfield are being returned to the United States. Some have already gone back stripped of their war-heads and fuel propellants, chained inside the cavernous interiors of the giant C-133 transport aircraft. The rockets are to be used for space research and training programmes. They caused a political uproar when they arrived in this country ready for erection on their launching sites. 63 09 20c

1963 10 11

A 'Flying Flea' airplane was built by Mr W.V. Smedley of Wisbech in 1936 and tested in Cambridge. But when the test pilot was killed elsewhere, the machine was abandoned 63 10 11d

1963 12 02

A new wind tunnel enabling scientists to study the low speed characteristics of aircraft has been installed in the aeronautical section of the University Engineering Laboratory – 63 12 02

1964 05 01

Airfield Construction Unit at RAF Waterbeach – feature – 64 05 01dd

1964 05 08

Willingham church roof angles dislodged when aircraft collided above church tower during WWII – 64 05 08b

1964 05 12

A wartime Spitfire has made the 250-mile road journey from RAF Middleton St George Yorkshire on a 60-foot transporter to Ely where it was lifted with help from a 10-ton crane from RAF Waterbeach operated by Mr Stanley Porter of Bohemond Street. Now fitters are re-assembling it on the lawn at the entrance to the RAF Hospital where it will be on permanent display and floodlit at night 64 05 12

1964 05 13

The United States Air Force 10th Tactical Wing based at Alconbury, is ready 24 hours a day to fly to targets in Europe. But their RB-66B aircraft carry cameras, not bombs, and targets are only strafed with fire canisters to illuminate the ground many thousands of feet below providing pictorial evidence of military build up or bridges. The planes are packed with electronic aids, important to penetrate strongly defended areas. On returning the nine-inch wide film is developed in seven minutes and examined while still wet. 64 05 13

1964 05 23

RAF Alconbury – feature on the USAF base – 64 05 23

1964 05 29

Heavy explosions and columns of smoke around Duxford airfield marked the destruction of groups of blast baffle walls which were built when jet aircraft came into general use after the war. Dickerson's hope to get most of the 56 walls, each weighing 240 tons, down in one day. Sixteen baffles near the main road are being left until last so police can assess whether any special traffic precautions are needed. The concrete rubble will be broken into hardcore to be used for building work at Arbury Road. 64 05 29

1964 06 09

Large twin-engined Vickers Varsity aircraft warm up their engines as Oakington Flying Training School start another period of night flying. The planes lumber round to the end of the runway, pause to allow safety checks and then haul themselves into the sky. Villagers attempting to sleep complain that all they do at Oakington is night flying and urge the RAF to relocate to quieter areas. But it is an essential part of the flying curriculum. 64 06 09

1964 07 06

Proposals for a new town for more than 100,000 people at Lakenheath, instead of Stansted were backed. It would very desirable to have some sort of growth in the area which at the moment is very sparsely populated and should suit industry. Planners say an airport at Stansted would take good agricultural land and travel developments such as helicopters and monorails would bring Lakenheath within an hour of the capital. It has the longest runway for planes in the country and could be developed as London's third airport. But there are no plans at present for closing the American base and a new hospital and other facilities have recently been built. 64 07 06

1964 08 03

The US Air Force 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing at Alconbury uses 1.5 m gallons of fuel a month in their RB-66 jets. Ninety per cent is loaded by two-man crews from an underground supply system and an aircraft can be refuelled within 15 minutes. Other aircraft are serviced by tankers like those used at petrol stations. Two six-inch pipelines direct from the supply department at Sawtrey service the two storage areas and the underground system with its 50,000 gallon tanks and seven pump stations. Another aspect of the fuel supply is the liquid oxygen plant manufacturing breathing oxygen for airmen. – 64 08 03b

1964 09 23

Cambridge airport, an asset to city – feature on Marshall's – 64 09 23a

1964 09 25

Cambridgeshire's 19 wartime airfields are falling into disuse or being reclaimed as farm land. Weed-choked runways, derelict barracks and tumbledown conning towers are all that is left. At Duxford the concrete baffles have been demolished and its runways are disappearing with the rubble being used for housing and road building. Waterbeach had a succession of Vikings and Vampires aircraft but now it is mainly trainers that take off. At Bottisham many of the buildings are used for storing grain. But Mepal, which recently had a Thor missile base, is now in the hands of the Americans – 64 09 25c

1964 11 26

When the RAF handed back land at Lt Gransden which they had commissioned during the war the owner got permission to let ten houses at Primrose Hill. These will remain, tenants are assured. Mrs S. Weston says they were quite comfortable and the rent was reasonable. They may be a bit on the damp side, but they have flush toilets, unlike others in the village. Miss D.E. Parker, 74, moved in three years ago. She enjoys the community life of the site and plays the piano in the tiny mission hall. 64 11 26a, b

1964 11 27

Wallis Autogyros Ltd, formed by Wing Commander Kenneth Wallis and his cousin, produce some of the world's smallest aircraft. Military versions of his autogyro have been tested by the Army and reached more than 10,000 feet. Now the design is being simplified for amateur flyers. Twelve are being completed at a factory at 121 Chesterton Road. His father built the 'Wallbro' monoplane in St Barnabas Road in 1909, but it was destroyed by a storm 64 11 27b

1965 01 07

RAF Lakenheath hospital has flying doctor service – 65 01 07b

1965 02 22

Week-end flying controversy – 65 02 22a

1965 03 03

Waterbeach RAF airfield sign warns of low-flying aircraft – 65 03 03a

1965 04 22

Wallis Autogyros, Chesterton Road set up by Ken Wallis & Geoff Wallis of Coton Court – 65 04 22a

1965 04 22

RAF Upwood demonstrate sonic booms – 65 04 22d

1965 10 12

Wallis Autogyro – first export order – 65 10 12e, 13a

1965 10 27

Barrage balloon from Cardington trailing 2,000 feet steel wire hits Magdalene college; 50 students evacuated due to fear of explosion – 65 10 27, a, 28a,b 6, 2J

1966 01 03

Army taking over R.A.F. Waterbeach in July – pic of Spitfire gate guard – 66 01 03

1966 01 14

Cambridge airport runway extension of 1000 feet approved, would divert Teversham road

1966 03 08

Plane crashes on A11 near Six Mile Bottom, two killed – 66 03 08

1966 08 09

Cambridge airport main runway may be extended across main Teversham Road but must not be used more than eight days a year, will enable larger and heavier aircraft to use it – 66 08 09a

1967 04 18

Canberra bomber crashes into empty house, Steeple Morden – 67 04 18

1967 11 17

Bassingbourn RAF bomber base to close in mid 1969, 140 civilians will lose jobs – 67 11 17a

1969 01 22

RAF Basingbourn to close – feature- 69 01 22

1970 01 06

U.F.O. over West Wickham rattles roof – 70 01 06

1970 09 12

Autogyro crash kills test pilot, Farnborough 70 09 12

1971 01 08

Hot-air balloons launched over Cambridge by Perse schoolboys – 70 01 08a

1971 07 15

RAF Oakington trains pilots – feature – 71 07 15

1971 08 05

First Vulcan bomber lands at Marshall's airfield – 71 08 05

1972 02 26

Production of the noses of the Concorde supersonic airliner, which was planned to be in Cambridge, has been taken away by the British Aircraft Corporation. All the research and development work on the nose has been done by Marshall's at Cambridge airport. The senior shop steward is to see the Cambridge MP, Mr David Lane to try to get the decision reversed

1972 11 06

UFO spotted [7,2]

1973 06 18

Marshall of Cambridge (Engineering) have just finished a nose transplant - on a giant Hercules transport aircraft. The successful transplant "operation" took two years to perform. The modified aircraft will investigate turbulence in clear and cloudy weather and is the only one of its kind. Inside the Hercules the transformation has been no less striking. A laboratory has been constructed and four scientists can keep track of data as it flows from the nose instruments to the aircraft's "brain centre"

1973 07 05

Oakington, the last operational RAF airfield in Cambridgeshire is to close down and will be sold off within two years, the Defence Lands Committee have recommended. The committee also says that other mid-Anglian airfields and military sites should be returned to civilian use and over 600 acres of land at Molesworth should be sold. It was a bomber base during the war and is now used as a United States Air Force stores and housing complex in association with their use of RAF Alconbury

1973 09 07

One of the longest and fondest traditions in American military history came to an end yesterday when the very last Dakota DC3 to serve in Northern Europe made its final flight into Mildenhall air base. They used to call the plane the Gooney Bird because of its ungainly and awkward appearance on the ground. Right on schedule the US Navy plane flew in for a champagne reception at the Naval Air Facility, Mildenhall

1973 10 23

Ely RAF Hospital may be developed as one of the three main Service hospitals in the country. The report of an inquiry into Defence Medical Services says each service should have one major hospital of up to 400 beds. In the case of the RAF it suggests that either to Ely hospital or the one at Halton,

Bucks., would be suitable for this kind of development. Ely RAF Hospital was opened in 1940 and since then has been considerably extended. For a number of years it has also admitted civilian patients and it is reckoned that about 30 per cent of people treated there are civilians. Last year it treated 6,000 in-patients and just over 31,000 out-patients

1974 03 15

A 17-foot high wire mesh security fence is taking shape round the former RAF camp at Stradishall near Haverhill, which is being converted to a prison. The camp, more recently used as a transit camp for Ugandan Asians is due to receive its first inmates next January. The base was abandoned by the RAF No.1 Navigation Training School in 1970 after 31 years' service. Now the camp will hold 700 prisoners, 500 category B offenders (not high-risk) in the main prison, to be called High Point, and 200 young offenders in a detention centre called North Ridge

1974 07 27

The USAF open day at Alconbury has been cancelled after IRA bomb warnings. The decision to put off the flying spectacular, which annually attracts thousands of visitors, was taken last night. Alconbury is the base of the 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing and their 54 Phantom aircraft operate within Nato.

1974 08 10

The decision to close down the RAF base at Oakington, first announced in 1972, was confirmed yesterday. There were tears in the eyes of many workers when Wing Commander G.J. Daly made the announcement. Mr Ivan Cockbill of Willingham, a chef at the station since 1970 said: "We hoped the closure would be shelved". Another worker, Mr Martin Rainesford, of Cambridge, who has worked at the base for 17 years said: "We are all sorry to see it close down". The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers will take over the base in April next year

1974 11 06

The departure of the last pilot training aircraft from RAF Oakington – a Varsity T Mark 1 – saw the end of an era at the base, which is due to be taken over by the army in March next year. The Varsity is the last of 31 used at the base since 1951. From 1962, about 1400 trainee pilots have recorded 60,000 landings at the airfield. The Varsity completed a sweep above the village and two fly-pasts at low-level before heading to its new home at Cottesmore in Lincolnshire.

1975 01 03

The meteorological office at RAF Oakington, which has kept weather records and made forecasts in Cambridgeshire since the second war is to close down. The closure of the office brings a step nearer the handover of the base in April to the army. Flying has ceased now. The weather area was a 50-mile radius around Oakington for flying purposes but forecasting for the public extended throughout Cambridgeshire

1975 02 26

Cambridgeshire County Council is to buy a 147 acre slice of Duxford airfield, including the mile-long runway, for an undisclosed sum. This will allow the Imperial War Museum to go ahead with its plans to house permanently its large collection of historic aircraft in the hangar and to develop the whole site into one of the largest aviation museum complexes in the country. The deal brings to an end almost ten years doubt and dispute over the future of one of the most historic airfields in aviation history

1975 04 25

RAF Debden closed this week. The axe of economy has severed Saffron Walden's last real link with wartime Britain. The RAF isn't making a bit of fuss about it. A quiet ceremony in front of the top brass from London and a private dining-in night in the officers' mess is the only salute the station will get. It was an accident which caused the station to be built in the first place. An old Bulldog bi-plane

crashed in a wheat field near Debden in 1934. War Office men who inspected the remains reported that it would be a good spot for an aerodrome.

1975 06 12

Cambridge airport new £100,000 custom's centre [5,16]

1976 03 05

A group of Cambridge young people are hoping to be able to fly their hot-air balloon regularly this year, after spending more than three years designing, building and redesigning it. The Cambridge Hot-Air Balloon Association consists of about eight young men, several ex-pupils of the Perse school. The saga began when George Laslett started experimenting with model balloons in tissue paper. By the time they had progressed to building paper balloons of up to 1,200 cubic feet capacity and flying them as an attraction at village fetes, they felt the time had come to start translating their dream of a man-carrying balloon into reality.

1976 07 09

Planeloads of Scandinavia shoppers will arrive in Cambridge in the coming winter if plans being discussed by the East Anglian Tourist Board are approved. The aim is to create an East Anglian shopping rival to London; Cambridge with its added tourist attractions will prove better than smaller schemes now being run for overseas shoppers in Norwich. The first shoppers' "special" is expected to arrive next winter and if plans are completed between British and Scandinavian operators the plane will turn round immediately to take Cambridge people for low-cost weekend trips to the Scandinavian countries. Discussions have centred on charter aircraft seating an average of 60 people

1976 07 15

Cambridgeshire planners are asking major international airlines to start a high-speed airbus service linking Cambridge with Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton airports. They also want the network to extend to the other provincial airports in East Anglia. The journey between Cambridge and London airport frequently forced businessmen to stop overnight and the Philips electrical organisation thinks it is worth while running a trip for businessmen between its Dutch factory and Cambridge every week. But a director of Premier Airlines of Cambridge said he did not think there is a regular demand, at the price one would have to pay c76 07 15

1976 08 06

Admiral of the Fleet, Earl Mountbatten of Burma, dropped in at the Burma Star Day at Waterbeach Barracks. His aim was to see for himself how, in just five years, "a bunch of amateurs" had managed to turn a small military tattoo into one of the biggest displays of its kind in the country. Flying displays were put on by numerous veteran and modern aircraft, ranging from the Spitfire to the USAF'S new F5E Tiger II fighters, based at Alconbury. A record 50,000 people attended the show and more than £6,000 profit was made for six charities catering for ex-servicemen

1976 08 26

200 men fought a blaze in forest and heath at Brandon which broke out when an American air force F4D Phantom jet fighter bomber crashed on take-off from RAF Lakenheath. A family narrowly escaped injury after a piece of the aircraft came through the roof of a nearby farmhouse. The bomber had recently been refuelled and had 600 rounds of shells on board. Some of the ammunition went off in the blaze, but no one was hurt. The main road was sealed off to all traffic as men struggled to bring the fire under control. The pilot and weapons systems officer both ejected to safety

1977 05 04

Two crewmen of an RAF Canberra and three children were killed when the plane crashed near houses at Oxmoor, Huntingdon. The main wreckage of the plane is spread around an area of grass at the end of Norfolk Road. The tail-plane of the Canberra wedged hard alongside one of the houses. Eight of the terraced houses appeared to be completely gutted with flames raging through the roofs. As the wreckage burned steadily police held back hundreds of watching residents. A spokesman at RAF

Wyton confirmed that one of their Canberra reconnaissance planes had crashed two miles from the runway as it came into land.

1977 05 05

Mr Harry Evans of Sycamore Drive on the Oxmoor estate, Huntingdon described the scene as the Canberra crashed. "As I was walking along I looked across the estate and there was this jet coming in low like it was in a nosedive. It looked as if the pilot was aiming away from the houses. Then it disappeared from sight and there was a dull thud. We saw black smoke and flames". Mrs Betty Smith escaped from her blazing kitchen in Norfolk Road. "The plane virtually landed in my front garden. I'd just come down to the kitchen. I covered my ears like I always do when I hear a plane close and then could see flames. They were coming across the kitchen floor and under the table and I ran"

1977 05 05

As Huntingdon mourned the death of three small children in the jet crash at Oxmoor, mystery still surrounds the cause of the crash. After experts had worked all night under floodlights amid the charred wreckage, one theory is that the twin engine Canberra photo-reconnaissance plane had suffered a failure in its Rolls-Royce engines. The two crewmen died as they fought to steer their crippled plane clear of the estate and a school 200 yards from the place where it crashed into eight terraced houses. Three small children died as blazing aircraft fuel spewed on to and into the houses

1977 05 05

The two crewmen of the RAF Canberra killed in the tragedy at Huntingdon may have sacrificed their lives trying to keep clear of a school nearby where 250 children were about to start their lunch break. The headmaster of Sapley Park Primary School, Mr John Richardson, said the whole disaster was played out in full view of the school. The aircraft crashed about 200 yards away just as the bell was ringing for the start of the break. If the pilot had stayed in the air a few seconds more the school would have been hit. The crew could have ejected to safety and left the plane to its own devices.

1977 05 05

The Mayor of Huntingdon said bureaucrats must take part of the blame for the Canberra jet crash disaster which killed five people. "It is clear the homes should not have been built under the flight path of the planes". The Oxmoor estate, where 2,000 families live, is mostly inhabited by Londoners who moved to the town under the Greater London Council expanding towns scheme and started in 1955. Residents have called for a halt to flights over the estate and threaten to block the runways at RAF Wyton.

1977 05 12

Huntingdon's "desolation row" where three children and two airmen died in last week's jet crash, will soon be no more. Contractors moved into Norfolk Road to begin demolishing the shattered and blackened wreck of seven houses. The machines brought to light pathetic mementoes of family life. Children's toys tumbled from upstairs bedrooms and the remains of a lunch that was never eaten disappeared under a shower of rubble. Huntingdon District Council intends to rebuild the block exactly as it looked before the crash. Greater London Council officials are searching their files for the original plans.

1977 05 17

The RAF disclosed officially that jet aircraft from RAF Wyton practice engine failures over Huntingdon but declined to comment on newspaper reports that a Wyton jet which crashed on the Oxmoor estate, killing five was practising a simulated engine failure when the disaster happened. A spokesman emphasised the manoeuvre is not dangerous and one engine was merely throttled back and can be put on to full power if something goes wrong.

1977 07 15

Aircraft sabotaged at Cambridge airport [5.17]

1977 08 06

A race against time to fly Concorde to the Duxford Aviation Museum is likely to provide a tense photo-finish. Contestants are the British Aircraft Corporation with its supersonic 01 prototype and Bovis with its giant bulldozers. The bulldozers are now poised to start digging up the runway to form part of the Western By-Pass and if they do it will end, once and for all, the on-off guessing game surrounding Concorde's "imminent" arrival. BAC's chief test pilot, Brian Trubshaw has made it clear he will need every available foot of runway to bring the aircraft in.

1977 08 20

Concorde, proud emblem of British civil aviation swooped low over Cambridge and its necklace villages to her new museum home at Duxford airfield, ending months of speculation and delay. Pilot Brian Trubshaw circled before putting the sleek, streamlined beauty on to the runway. As the wheels touched down a parachute flew out from the back of the aircraft to slow her down on the comparatively short 6,000-ft runway. In the background was equipment belonging to the construction firm Bovis, waiting to lop 1,000 feet from the runway to make way for the Cambridge western by-pass. Now Concorde is here to stay – the runway is too short for her to take off again.

1977 09 02

Burma Star Day at Waterbeach airfield has become one of the region's major annual events and it is with a mixture of sadness and relief that the organisers present their last show. After six years they have decided it is time for a rest. There will be the usual parade of events with the sensational display of the RAF Red Arrows, the freefalling RAF parachutists the Falcons and the flypast of the huge triangular Vulcan as the highlights of the day. Massed bands, motor cycle displays and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight will be on show.

1977 09 05

The last Burma Star Day at Waterbeach went out with a bang – with record profits of more than £7,000 and a record attendance of over 53,000. It will be the last air show and display; the organiser and controller, Mr W.H.P. Clarke said "The show depends on many local volunteers who do this at weekends and in their spare time". The prime attraction must have been the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight but there was also the sole remaining airworthy RAF Mosquito. They were joined by aircraft of today including a Buccaneer, Phantom and a pair of Harrier jump jets.

1977 10 25

The spate of UFO sightings south of Cambridge has continued. Saffron Walden police received two independent reports of what appeared to be two very large headlamps which went into a star shape the size of a double-decker bus. It then transformed into the shape of a shuttlecock with red beams coming from both ends. The sequence was repeated six times. The next night a driver saw a bright amber light trailing an aircraft, it then hovered and dashed across the sky at very high speed. About a dozen other people claim to have seen strange lights in the sky during the last few months.

1977 11 22

A Huntingdon inquest returned an accident verdict on the deaths of the crew of a Canberra jet plane that crashed on Oxmoor and on the three children who were trapped when their homes were turned into an inferno. At the time the plane was carrying out a practice overshoot of RAF Wyton which involved approaching the runway with one of the engines throttled back to simulate engine failure. Huntingdon MP, Sir David Renton, said the RAF must stop practising such engine failures over built-up areas & called for greater co-operation with the RAF about building homes under flightpaths.

1977 11 27 c

There was confirmation from Newmarket of the Cambridge flying saucer report. Mr J. Beirne reported seeing 'a definite circular object while cycling along Madingley Road, Cambridge. Now comes a report from a bus conductor of seeing a 'bright cigar-shaped object' flying at great speed at Newmarket. It gave out an orange-coloured tint and was fire by three small tappets at the rear. There have been isolated cases of practical demonstrations of guided missiles being carried out in the

Mildenhall area and on the Norfolk coast. These guided weapons are known to be capable of speeds over 2,000 m.p.h. c77 11 27

1978 07 04

The Huntingdon homes on the Oxmoor estate shattered by a jet crash which killed five people are to be rebuilt, more than a year after the accident. The long wait has been caused by sorting out details of compensation and insurance payments. Seven homes that were so badly damaged that they had to be demolished will be rebuilt. The announcement came as residents living opposite the site were about to begin a petition demanding action. One said: "It is horrible. We want to forget but we cannot because it is there all the time reminding us."

1978 08 09

A major aircraft building job is being given to Marshalls of Cambridge by the Ministry of Defence. It involves the stretching of the fuselages of 29 Hercules aircraft to allow it to carry extra cargo. The conversion will be fitted into the normal overhaul and serving work which the firm carries on. Sir Arthur Marshall said: "At the moment we are on various major contracts for the Hercules – replacement of wing centre sections and outer wings – as well as work on military and civil aircraft from all over the world".

1978 08 23

A leakage of thousands of gallons of aircraft fuel at the Mildenhall American Air Force base may mean water supplies to 40,000 homes in the surrounding area will have to be cut off. The fuel is trapped underground near a bore-hole serving homes in the Ely and Littleport area. The Water Authority was informed on August 4th although the leakage had been discovered on July 18th when it was a kilometre from the bore-hole. Since then it had moved 200 metres but it was not clear whether it would eventually end up in the water supply. The oil is trapped in porous rocks and holes are being drilled to locate it. The USAF then hopes to pump the fuel to the surface.

1979 03 20

Milford Docks Air Services Ltd has been operating an Executive aircraft charter service at Cambridge airport since 1977 offering rapid transport to their executives throughout the UK and Europe to the expanding industrial and technological business community locally. While charter flying will never be 'cheap', in many cases if four or five travel together, it is actually cheaper than scheduled airline fares and it is becoming increasingly common for secretaries to be included in a group at no extra cost, resulting in a far more successful business conference.

1979 05 14

Wartime memories came flooding back to the ex-servicemen who strolled across Witchford airfield. A giant hangar here, a derelict office there, and bits of crumbling runway everywhere: all helped them to remember the days when four-engined Lancaster bombers rumbled off the airfield on bombing runs to Germany. Other colleagues were at the nearby Shoulder of Mutton pub, supping pints & swapping yards. All were members of 115 squadron who had returned for reunion celebrations 79 05 14

1979 01 05

First Thomson holiday jet Boeing 737 leaves Cambridge airport for Tunisia [5.18]

1979 03 20

Milford Docks Air Services Ltd has been operating an Executive aircraft charter service at Cambridge airport since 1977 offering rapid transport to their executives throughout the UK and Europe to the expanding industrial and technological business community locally. While charter flying will never be 'cheap', in many cases if four or five travel together, it is actually cheaper than scheduled airline fares and it is becoming increasingly common for secretaries to be included in a group at no extra cost, resulting in a far more successful business conference.

1979 09 21

Three people died and seven were injured when two RAF jets crashed at Wisbech. One plane narrowly missed two schools and a college before plunging into Ramnoth Road, demolishing two houses and a bungalow. Hundreds of people, including the Mayor, frantically searched through the rubble for survivors. Police put a 'disaster plan' into immediate action and emergency services rushed to the area which was evacuated and cordoned off. The second plane crashed at New Drove, near the town's industrial area. The aircraft, single-seater Harrier jump jets, were based at RAF Wittering. c.20.9.1979

1979 09 22

Stunned and exhausted the Mayor of Wisbech spoke of the appalling tragedy which rocked his town. Coun Bob Lake was one of the first on the scene of the disaster in which an RAF Harrier jump jet totally destroyed two houses and a bungalow following a mid-air collision. "I just ran for the smoke as fast as I could. When I arrived in Ramnoth Road my heart stopped", he said. "I was informed that there was a man and a child trapped so I started tearing at the rubble. The remains of the three buildings were on fire and gas filled the air. The three people who died were a former Mayor of Wisbech, a 40-year old man and his 2½ year-old son. There were stories of narrow escapes as the plane passed narrowly over two schools and an 800-pupil college 22.9.1979

1979 10 31

A US Air Force F111 fighter-bomber crashed at Harlton. Nearby houses were rocked and a great sheet of flame was sent up as the plane plummeted into a spinney. Trees were pushed downwards and branches torn off and only the tail section was visible embedded in the ground. First on-the-spot rescuers dashed around the meadows trying to find the crew, but they had parachuted down several fields away. The crash came after a series of low-level flying missions over the area. Only two weeks ago two RAF Harrier jump jets crashed at Wisbech CEN 31.10.1979

1979 11 05

An American newspaper, the 'Omaha World-Herald' has reported that after a B-47 bomber crashed at Lakenheath RAF station in 1956 flaming fuel pouring from the ruptured tanks engulfed a building containing three nuclear bombs. If they had exploded radioactive material would have been showered over a large area. But a major accident was averted when the base Fire Chief ignored the burning bomber and its four-man crew and concentrated on dousing the flames surrounding the nuclear storage building. The incident was kept secret, as the British people had not been told that nuclear bombs were being kept in the U.K.

1979 12 06

Villagers at Harston, Hauxton and Foxton were spellbound as they watched a swarm of unidentified flying objects dodging around the sky but the entertainment turned to fear when a massive UFO hovered low past the village pub where the regulars called in the police. People hid away indoors rather than face the brilliant flashing lights and others drove off the road to avoid being under the flight paths. Police say there was no local flying and an astronomer said that there had recently been a number of reports of unusual lights in the sky, though nothing like these

1980 01 04

One of the strangest new shapes in the sky has lifted off the runway with its Elsworth designer, John Edgley sitting next to a test pilot. His aircraft, the Optica, has been nicknamed the Bug Eye because of its odd looks. The cabin is a Perspex bubble and it is designed to have the low-speed capability of a helicopter but be as cheap and easy to fly as a conventional light aircraft, making it an economical observation plane. Its future roles could include powerline inspection, fire-watching, traffic patrol and pleasure flying CEN 4.1.1980

1980 01 11

Reports of a UFO which held Harston villagers spellbound have been received from other parts of the world. A researcher who investigated the phenomenon says they appear to be genuine descriptions of

an unknown technology. Other reports have been received locally. Desmond January, a Cambridge estate agent, said he watched a line of three white lights which he thought at first were helicopters, but there was no noise and one shot away at right angles up into the sky. Another resident of Hauxton reported something similar that evening while on New Years Day a lady described seeing a dark cylindrical object pass over her home in Hills Road, Cambridge. The following day two teenagers at Girton told of a light 'burning like magnesium ribbon' 80 01 11

1980 01 25

UFO hovers over Marshall's [7.3]

1980 02 07

Cambridge Airport is preparing for their biggest-ever summer season of flights to the Channel Islands. Jersey European Airways, successors to Intra Airways which has operated the service for the past eight years is planning a weekly total of 14 return flights from April. Most passengers will travel by 48-seater turbo-prop Herald aircraft though a flight to Guernsey will be by a 60-seater Viscount 700 aircraft. Fares have risen steeply since last year. A peak adult return fare has gone up from £46 to £72. Flight time is one hour 20 minutes 80 02 07

1980 03 27

When Saffron Walden town clerk Malcolm White got a phone call to say that the council owned an aeroplane he suspected the caller was pulling his leg. But he went to Cleaves' old motor yard and found a dummy aeroplane that had been given by veterans of the USAF based at Debden during the war. It consisted of a fuselage made from an old bomber fuel tank with wings welded on. The plane is trapped in a 'nose dive' position because of a tree growing up and around it. The council has now to decide what to do with it. 80 03 27a

1980 06 18

John Major, MP, says he regrets the Government's decision to base Cruise missiles at Molesworth, a disused RAF base used by the USAF. It has enough spare land to accommodate the buildings to store the missiles and is close to RAF Alconbury which can house the extra US servicemen. Cruise missiles are mobile weapons designed to be driven away from their bases in time of conflict. The closeness of the improved A604 and A1 was another decisive factor. 80 06 18a

1980 06 18

Molesworth villagers have reacted to the news that Cruise missiles may be stationed at the RAF base. Seven years ago they won a battle to prevent the building of a nuclear power station there and feel they have been picked on because they are a rural area with a scattered population. The landlady of the Cross Keys said it could bring a lot of much-needed business but was annoying for private individuals who had moved there for peace and quiet. 80 06 18c

1980 09 17

An undertaker sitting in his van on the outskirts of Barkway saw a saucer-shaped unidentified flying object cruise silently past at a height of 60 feet. "We were eating our lunch and this brilliant silver object went past us", he said. "It was travelling about 30 mph and looked like two dustbin lids stuck together; it was moving in a straight line, not going up or down". Police say the Army had troops on manoeuvres in the area but it was nothing to do with them. 80 09 17

1981 03 04

The famous autogyros produced by Ely-born aviation expert Wing-Commander Ken Wallis may soon go into production. They can carry out many of the roles of a helicopter but are much cheaper, costing around £17,000. A fighter version was used by James Bond in the film 'You Only Live Twice'. His father built his own aircraft in the garden of a house in St Barnabas Road in 1908; it flew from a field near Fulbourn but was later destroyed in a storm. 81 03 04a

1981 04 01

The Government has given the go-ahead for USAF TR1 spy planes to be stationed at RAF Alconbury by 1983 together with thousands of extra American airmen and their families. Their deployment will involve additional construction work estimated at £40 million and be the biggest boost for the Huntingdonshire economy for many years. This makes Alconbury – the future Command base for Cruise missiles at Molesworth – a vital part of NATO's defence strategy. 81 04 01

1981 06 30

Just over 70 years ago an enthusiastic CDN reporter wrote about a 'brand new flying machine of the monoplane variety' built by Horace and Percy Wallbro in their back garden in St Barnabas Road. With an astonishing eye for technical detail he described the world's first aircraft built from light steel tubing. Now, using his notes, their sons have built a replica and proved it really could have flown 81 06 30a

1981 10 06

The United States Air Force at Lakenheath unveiled its new bombing system. Called Pave Tack it is 'an electro-optical target designator system'. You get the target in the centre of a cross on a television screen and watch a 'smart' bomb automatically fly there and destroy it from an aircraft travelling a supersonic speed, probably in the middle of the night. It makes the 'super-sophisticated' F-111F aircraft one of the most deadly strike forces in the world. 81 10 06c

1981 12 29

A women's peace camp has been set up in freezing conditions near RAF Molesworth by anti-Cruise missile campaigners. Dozens of protestors gathered at the tiny village of Clopton near the base where the missiles are expected to be deployed in 1983. Three women and their two dogs intend to live 'indefinitely' in two old caravans on the base perimeter. A similar vigil is being kept at Greenham Common in Berkshire. 81 12 29

1982 01 07

The Government has refused to pay any compensation for the massive pollution of water supplies which occurred after aircraft fuel leaked from tanks on the Mildenhall air base three years ago. One of the most productive water sources at Beck Row is still out of action and special pipelines have been laid to continue supplies. Now other toxic materials are threatening the underground reservoirs. It could cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to put right. 82 01 07

1982 02 26

The revolutionary government of Iran tried to buy spare parts for military aircraft from Marshall of Cambridge, despite the Western arms embargo. The order was hidden in a web of false documentation but Marshall had immediate doubts as only a limited number of countries could need spares for the giant C-130 Hercules. They discovered the parts were to be shipped to Libya after arriving in Italy and contact the anti-terrorist squad. 82 02 26

1982 03 01

Hundreds of police, many armed, were rushed to Stansted when a hijacked Boeing 737 landed. Roadblocks were set up on all roads as the plane, bearing the Air Tanzania markings was diverted to a remote corner of the airfield. Negotiations immediately began to save the lives of more than 90 hostages and crew. 82 03 01

1982 04 30

Marshall's engineers have provided the Falkland Islands task force with a vital new component in their armoury – a transport aircraft that can be refuelled in mid-air. They have carried out conversion work on a prototype Hercules 130, the RAF's workhorse, in record time. The giant transporter had its first test-flight from Cambridge this week when the system worked without problems. The Marshalls men are jubilant that they got it right first time and so quickly. 82 04 30a

1982 05 19

Prince Philip flew into Cambridge and made what is believed to be the first helicopter landing on Parker's Piece. It made quite a stir among people making their way to work. It may also have made them late because police cordoned off the Piece for the landing, special permission for which had been obtained from the City Council 82 05 19 [02,4.22]

1982 06 11

The new flying craze, sport and business of microlights has arrived in Cambridgeshire. Taurus Aviation has been set up at Haddenham and with the co-operation of farmers they now have a choice of fields from which they can take off and land. Meanwhile a Haverhill Company is selling an American-made microlight for £3,000 including five hour's free instruction. It can be assembled in half-an-hour and carried on a car roof-rack. 82 06 11 b&c

1982 06 29

RAF Brampton, headquarters of Support Command had the job of ensuring that every item needed for the Falklands war arrived where they should. They were charged with recovering refuelling probes from scrapped Vulcans around the country, baffling onlookers when a lorry-load of engineers came screaming up to a plane on public display, leapt out, disconnect the probe and drove off with it. They were then sent to Marshall of Cambridge who have been converting Hercules C130s for in-flight refuelling. 82 06 29 & 29a

1982 07 01

A crop-spraying plane sliced through power cables at Landbeach, narrowly missed crashing near houses and flew off, leaving 2,500 homes without electricity. The pilot had been skimming a field, flying under the 11,000-volt cables which are just 20 feet above the ground, when a wing clipped the wire. This is the seventh accident involving a crop-spraying aircraft in the past five years. In 1977 a pilot was killed when his machine plunged to the ground at March. Others occurred at Earith, Keyston and Abbots Ripton. 82 07 01

1982 08 31

Mepal welcome a group of 200 airmen who flew bombers for the 75th (New Zealand) Squadron when they packed into the village for three days of reminiscence. A reunion dance was held in a marquee on the playing field where the New Zealand High Commissioner gave a fluent address in Maori. Clement Freud, MP, had a stuffed kiwi above the front door of his house, the RAF Memorial Flight flew in and there was a display of parachuting. 82 08 31b

1982 09 01

A St Neots firm's publicity gimmick in the shape of a giant silver balloon did its job too well – it became a UFO soaring over three counties. The runaway 12ft balloon broke free from its moorings at the Hi-Sell Direct furniture warehouse at Gamlingay and floated about 10 foot above the ground until it was caught by a farmer and tied to the roof of a police car. 82 09 01

1982 09 02

If you want to buy a microlight aircraft in Cambridgeshire there is only one place you should go – Taurus Aviation of Haddenham. They are agents for Puma aircraft with prices ranging from £2,317 for a single-seater to £3,230 for a two-seater model. A trial flight, just to see if you like the sensation, will cost £11.50 and dual instruction is £23 an hour. It seems a lot of money, but middle-aged people find it thrilling. 82 09 02

1983 02 17

A 130-ton TriStar airliner, the largest ever to land at Marshall's, marks the start of a six-plane conversion programme that will keep the firm's 800-strong aero-engineering staff in work for the next four years. The £50 million contract is to convert four into 37,500-gallon tankers for flight refuelling duties and the others to freighters with big cargo doors. 83 02 17

1983 04 05

Mystery surrounds the cause of a plane crash at Lt Downham in which three men lost their lives. The Musketeer plane had taken off from Marshall's airport. It was seen to emerge from clouds with its right wing missing. It then broke up in mid-air before nose-diving to the ground on a farm owned by Ron Gillett. Wreckage was spread over four fields with parts buried six feet into the ground. 83 04 05 p1

1983 06 21

Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Heseltine, paid tribute when a memorial to over 100 Polish parachutists was unveiled at Audley End House. During the war it was used as the headquarters of the Special Operations Executive where scores of Polish men and women were trained before being parachuted into their home country, 108 lost their lives. 83 06 21 p11

1983 07 12

Two Cambridgeshire policemen, Gil Boyd and Bob Reynolds, set a world record with a sponsored parachute 'flight' under ten London bridges over the Thames. Pc Boyd said there were a few hair-raising moments – when he dived head-first into the water at the start and when his parachute tapped the roofs of three bridges. Bob said he felt a bit air-sick but did very well for somebody who'd only been parachuting three weeks. They hope to raise £5,000 for Great Ormond Street Hospital. 83 07 12 p7

1984 01 16

Phantom jets screamed overhead as the Bishop of Huntingdon blessed the newest peace camp opposite USAF Alconbury. Provocatively placed almost opposite the American air base main gates, its launch became a centre for a storm of political and theological controversy. Cloaked against the cold with a guitar at his feet, Dr Gordon Roe preached his sermon to about 150 peace campaigners shivering on the grass verge. "Happy are those who work for peace. God will call them his children", he quoted from the Bible. But his 'forward' position has been attacked by Huntingdon's MP, Mr John Major, who did not attend the ceremony. The campaigners claim that Alconbury, not Molesworth – will become the home of Cruise missiles. 84 01 16 p10

1984 01 16

The USAF base at Alconbury is to become a Cruise missile assembly site. The missiles will be flown to Alconbury for assembly and transferred to four permanent bunkers at Molesworth. RAF Waterbeach, RAF Feltwell and RAF Upwood are to house 500-bed nuclear war hospital centres. They will renovate existing buildings then mothball them until needed for military casualties of war in Europe. 84 01 16 p1

1984 03 12

Despite rain and a wicked wind Cambridge University undergraduates astonished bystanders with their Rag Day activities. Prince Edward started a sponsored crawl to Grantchester, there were parachute jumps, exhibitions of motorbike skills and a tug of war. Some students with distinguished careers ahead of them leapt from Silver Street Bridge into the Cam wearing whiskers, tails and picnic plates for ears in an attempt to fly across the river. Two perplexed French visitors summed it up: "If they are so clever, how can they be so stupid?" 84 03 12 p7

1984 03 21

A back garden in Perne Road has become a makeshift aircraft factory. Two plane enthusiasts, Peter Fabish and Andy Crumphorn have been chiselling, sawing and shaping the sheet metal, struts and spars which will eventually become a Soneral light racing plane capable of looping the loop and acrobatic flying. They intend to find a farmer's field from which to fly it 84 03 21 p7

1984 05 11

Millie Howes of Houghton will be reliving fond memories when she settles down to watch her television. She worked in the Portholme aircraft factory at Huntingdon during the First World War

helping build Camel fighters. A film made in about 1917 is to be shown on the programme showing Millie working in the factory. "When we first started we were given carpentry lessons, then put on fuselages and had to put the struts in and wire them up, I supposed where worked on two planes a day", she remembers. We earned £2 a week, which was good money, but it wasn't very warm and we had no canteen", she says 84 05 11 p13

1984 10 17

RAF Mildenhall had been officially open for just four days when, 50 years ago, it was used as the starting-point for an air race from England to Australia. It had no windsock, over-enthusiastic spectators damaged the aircraft and there was no accommodation for competitors or ground-crew, which led to pilots sleeping in the draughty hangars. Now two light aircraft will take off to retrace the flight path of the competitors. 84 10 17 p18

1984 10 19

Ken Wallis, the aviator who invented James Bond's "Little Nellie", has notched up two world records at RAY Wyton. Following a measured course along the 16ft drain at Chatteris he attained a speed of 117.8 mph – beating the previous record held by an American by almost 10 mph. He now holds 15 of the 16 world records associated with an autogyro. The Wallis family are no strangers to Cambridge. In 1910 his father took their Wallbro monoplane to a field near Fulbourn for a maiden flight. But after a couple of hops and a bump they called it a day. Now Ken hopes to arrange a commemoration to mark his father's efforts 84 10 19 p18 (16 by 1985) (5.9,5.10)

1984 10 29

Teacher Michael Bowyer always hoped that when he retired all his ex-pupils would come back and fill the school playground. Now Morley Memorial School, where he has taught for 31 years, is trying to contact as many as possible of the 1,100 for a special farewell. Michael did not set out to be a schoolmaster. He loved anything that flies but an illness left his eyesight damaged and he was unable to join the RAF. Now he will concentrate on a book about German wartime raids on East Anglia. 84 10 29 p13

1984 01 15

The USAF 48th Tactical Fighter Wing has completed 25 years at its base at Lakenheath. It flies about 80 F-111 swing-wing jets which are capable of carrying nuclear weapons and use a sophisticated laser guidance system to ensure their bombs hit the target in all weathers. Lakenheath has been an American base since 1948 when B-29 Superfortress bombers arrived as part of the 'Cold War' build up. Now it is the biggest in Britain with nearly 6,000 American servicemen, women and civilians working there. 85 01 15

1985 02 08

An aircraft carrying the Princess of Wales made a dramatic touchdown in Cambridge in a blinding snowstorm. Diana, wearing a red coat, stepped from the plane to a freshly-cleared patch of runway. Then her driver battled through traffic-clogged city streets to get the snow Princess to Peterhouse where she was met by flag-waving students who braved the appalling weather and saw a demonstration of research work into cot deaths. 85 02 08

1985 02 14

The bug-eyed Optica plane designed in Cambridgeshire has won its certificate of airworthiness. It can loiter at under 60 miles and hour, carries three people and is intended for observation work, aerial photography and sight-seeing. It was invented by John Edgley of Elsworth who planned to build it locally. But because of difficulties in finding a suitable site the firm has moved to Wiltshire. 85 02 14a

1985 02 14

Ken Wallis sets off for another record – 85 02 14

1985 05 22

Autogyro pioneer Ken Wallis has just notched up his 16th world record. Flying from Waterbeach, Ken completed his remarkable record-breaking flight to mark the 75th anniversary of the first public viewing of a monoplane built in Cambridge by his father and uncle. "It seemed that the anniversary should be marked in some way, so I made an attempt upon the one world record not held by my autogyro aircraft", he said. 85 05 22a & b

1985 08 09

A pilot and navigator scrambled away unscathed when their Canberra jet on take-off and caught fire at RAF Alconbury. The photo-reconnaissance plane had switched to the airfield while improvements are carried out at Wyton. Twenty-nine people have died in military manoeuvres over East Anglia in the last nine years. A Canberra practicing a simulated engine failure crashed near a row of houses on the Oxmore Estate, Huntingdon in May 1977. Then in December an American F1-11 narrowly missed a school when it plunged into a housing estate at Newmarket. 85 08 09

1985 10 04

Duxford Lodge Hotel opened to its first guests to reveal comfortable three-star accommodation and a restaurant which should prove popular with travellers taking a break from the M11. The former Highfield House Hotel has been transformed to create a country house atmosphere. During the war it was an RAF HQ and amongst officers billeted there was Group Captain Douglas Bader whose bedroom has now been incorporated into the new coffee lounge. Winter weekend breaks are offered at £60 per person for two nights including breakfast and dinner. 85 10 04 & a

1985 10 16

RAF Newmarket & Snailwell – history 85 10 16 & a

1985 10 23

Edgley Aircraft, producers of Optica which was first flown 1979 goes into liquidation – 85 10 23

1985 10 24

Fire ripped through the nerve centre of the RAF's UK Support Command at Brampton in Cambridgeshire's biggest blaze for years. More than 100 firemen fought for over two hours to bring the flames under control but the building may have to be demolished. There are fears that vital documents may have been destroyed though they will not affect the running of the Air Force. There is no reason to suspect arson. Around 400 people, both military and civilian personnel, work in the headquarters. 85 10 24

1985 11 16

Marshalls retains contract on Hercules transport aircraft – 85 11 16

1985 12 16

Military convoys allegedly carrying nuclear weapons regularly travel through or close to Cambridge according to 'Polariswatch', a branch of CDN. They say an 11-vehicle convoy travelled along the northern bypass on its way from Scotland to RAF Honington in Norfolk. This is certain to annoy Labour and Liberal city councillors who have fought a long anti-nuclear campaign. They may call together all local peace groups to seek their views on a ban on the transportation of radioactive materials 85 12 16

1986 04 15

Lakenheath F-111 bombers took part in the air strike against Libya overnight. The 1,600 mph planes carrying 37,000lbs of bombs left just before 2am, their thunderous roar waking residents all over the area. The strike was orchestrated from USAF Mildenhall, European command headquarters of the 'Silk Purse' squadron kept on permanent standby for just such an operation. In peacetime it is mainly a transit base for US personnel, home of the 513th Tactical Airlift Wing and a refuelling tanker centre. It also plays host to the electronic spy planes, U2s and the SR-71 'Blackbirds' 86 04 15

1986 05 29

Cambridge airport plans for £15 million hanger announced, opposed, inquiry [6.1]

1986 07 01

Aircraftsman David Morley was the first man to set foot on what is now Wyton airfield. He had been sent to an old hospital site: there wasn't a building, brick or hangar foundation to be seen – just fields. When he left for Iraq seven months later RAF Wyton was a growing military zone. The 'invasion' caused a great patriotic stir among villagers: "they referred to us as the 'aerodrome men' and we were invited into vicarages and parties. We were easy to spot as we still wore First World War uniforms, dog collar and all, and were issued with silver-headed canes", he recalls. 86 07 01

1986 07 10

Marshalls contract for Lockheed early-warning plane – 86 07 10c

1986 10 21

RAF Alconbury is fast becoming the biggest American military complex in Britain. A £200 million development scheme is under way and the number of military personnel will be increased to more than 5,000 in the next two years. It has a mixture of aircraft: Phantoms and high-flying TR1s provide tactical reconnaissance and the F5s provide combat training and represent Soviet aircraft in mock dogfights with NATO aircraft 86 10 21b

1987 01 12

It was pitch dark at 3am one Sunday morning as a Newmarket lorry driver was making his way north of Littleport towards Welney. He was talking to his wife on CD radio when suddenly a bright green light appeared in the sky. It was heading down to earth at tremendous speed, then changed direction and zipped across the road before disappearing. His experiences follow that of two Burwell women who saw huge orange lights above the fields near Swaffham Prior. These are the first unidentified flying objects reported locally for six years. 87 01 12

1987 02 23

Two Newmarket families had a miracle escape when a blazing American jet crashed just a few feet from their home. The F-111 plane plummeted into the garden of a house at Clarehaven Stables in Bury Road. Wreckage was scattered over the garden and holes were made in the house roof. But miraculously no one inside was hurt. The plane's two crew members were blasted clear by their ejector seats and were treated by a team from the Magpas 'flying doctor' service. 87 02 23

1987 02 23

The F-111 jet crash at Newmarket is the latest in a string of accidents. Two months ago two RAF Tornados plummeted into the countryside, one close to Peterborough and the other just missed a Norfolk school. In 1985 a Canberra exploded into flames when it smashed into fields near Alconbury. In 1981 an F-111 crashed while approaching Lakenheath and another rocked houses at Harlton when it hit the ground with practice bombs aboard. In December 1977 a fighter came down a few hundred yards from a Newmarket school sparking a major scare as police feared one of the plane's bombs could have gone off 87 02 23a

1987 06 06

Cambridge graduate Michael Foale has been named by Nasa as its first English-born space shuttle astronaut. Mr Foale, whose parents live in Cambridge, graduated from Queens' College and completed a PhD in Astrophysics at Lucy Cavendish College six years ago. He first learned to fly at Marshall's airfield while a student. "He is absolutely over the moon", said his father retired Air Commodore Colin Foale who lives in Cambridge. 87 06 06

1987 06 12

In 1955 140 Cambridge army reservists in the 629 Light Ack-Ack Royal Artillery (TA) Regiment volunteered to jump out of an aeroplane. They became the 629 Parachute Light Regiment (TA), one of the best squads in the country. Amongst their ranks was Col Peter Storey-Pugh who'd escaped from Colditz and Col John Beckett who'd been captured by the Japanese in Singapore. But 18 months later the MOD reviewed its strategy and the men returned to infantry duties. There were no deaths during the regiment's brief history and only a few injuries. Now the Cambridge Parachute Regimental Association is seeking more members. 87 06 12e

1987 08 21

Former airman, James Chainey, has unlocked the secrets of a 'signed' ceiling in the historic Eagle pub, Bene't Street where American and British airmen wrote their names and squadron numbers in candle smoke. The ceiling is covered in nicotine and many of the numbers are almost illegible because of overwriting. Some relate to aspects of the war. 'Pressure Boys' refer to extreme weather conditions at the US base Seething, 'Wild Hares' were the B24 Liberator crews and 'Aphrodite' was a pilotless American aircraft loaded with explosives. 87 08 21

1987 09 11

In 1931 Dr Norman de Bruyne, then aged 26, set up the Cambridge Aircraft Construction Company which produced the Snark, a rakish four-seat light, strong monoplane monoplane. The first flight was uneventful, apart from the engine stopping while it was flying over Cambridge, but it landed safely. It was held together with casein glue which had been used on all wooden aircraft. Then he set up a new company, Aero Research at Duxford where he developed Aerolite, formaldehyde glue which was used during WW2 for the construction of motor boats and transport gliders. In 1947 the firm became part of CIBA 87 09 11a

1987 10 06

An amazing plan to relocate Marshall's Airport to Waterbeach airfield and use the hundreds of acres vacant for a massive housing estate will be put to county councillors. It would solve the city's shortage of land for housing and end aircraft noise problems for residents. The move would create more jobs and relieve traffic. There would then be no need to spend millions of pounds on a proposed new overspill village in the fens. But the airport authorities do not agree. 87 10 06

1987 10 15

Cambridge's first airborne pleasure trip service has just taken off. Techair, a charter company, offers flights from Marshall's Airport in a five-seater Piper Aztec. They charge £14 for a 15-minute trip over the city. The weather for the inaugural flight was dull, raining and windy, buffeting the plane as the pilot pointed out landmarks. The flights are nice for foreign tourists but are mainly aimed at local people who have no experience of flying a small plane. 87 10 15a

1987 12 09

The announcement that a flight of Cruise missiles based at RAF Molesworth will be the first to go under the superpowers' INF agreement prompted celebrations amongst peace campers. Protestors danced around a blazing model of a cruise missile outside the base. But the campers, who celebrate their sixth anniversary at Molesworth on Saturday, vow they will continue until all equipment has been removed from the base. The landlord of the Red Lion pub at Clopton said he welcomed the agreement. 87 12 09

1987 12 14

Champagne flowed at RAF Molesworth as hundreds of peace protestors celebrated the signing of the historic INF treaty. Campaigners festooned barbed wire fences with balloons and banners to mark the deal which will eventually eliminate the medium-range nuclear weapons deployed at bases used by the Americans. Elsewhere children from Histon and Impington took part in a peace celebration quiz; the youngest winner, Alex Mervart (8) received a £1 voucher from the Rev Tony Barker of Histon Baptist Church 87 12 14c

1988 03 04

A novel new executive taxi service may be launched in Cambridge. 'Destination Direct' will transport executives from the company car park to open ground nearest their destination – by helicopter. It will feature Bell Jet Ranger four-seaters and the three-seater Hughes 500's travelling at about 100 road miles per hour. The cost of a journey from Cambridge to Heathrow would be about £470 return. The man behind the scheme believes there are a lot of people who would make use of the advantages 88 03 04

1988 03 27

Marshalls granted permission for Jumbo jet repair & maintenance hangar – 88 03 17

1988 04 18

The historic Eagle Hotel in Bene't Street has closed for a year or two while building work is carried out nearby. It has been favourite of tourists, dons and actors from the Arts Theatre. The people who discovered DNA were regulars and the traitor, Kim Philby, also drank there. Former RAF Chief Technician, James Chainey, who has made a study of the wartime writings on the ceiling, was among the final drinkers. But late arrivals found many of the pumps had already run dry and some of the fittings taken down 88 04 18

1988 04 27

Few Huntingdon people mourned when the last Phantom flew out of RAF Alconbury last week with their ear-splitting noise as they took off and the distinctive whine as they came to land. Their place has been taken by A-10 Thunderbolts which are basically a flying cannon with a gun that can tear tanks apart. They are about the size of a wartime B-25 bomber and are very manoeuvrable making it a complete contrast to the TR-1 spyplane and F-5 Tiger fighters which are based there 88 04 27a

1988 06 08

The new Support Command headquarters at RAF Brampton was opened by the Duke of Gloucester. Finished in RAF blue, the modern brick and glass office block is the administrative nerve centre for the Air Force. The command is responsible for 212 units with a staff of about 48,000, flying training schools, maintenance units, hospitals and US bases. It replaces a building destroyed by fire. Extensive investigations into the cause of the blaze failed to discover the cause, but it was believed to be accidental. 88 06 08a

1988 11 04

Thirteen of the world's largest military aircraft shelters are being built at RAF Alconbury to house the TR-1 spy plane with its huge 104 feet wingspan. They use enough steel to stretch from London to Southampton and are large enough to hold 50 buses. They are part of a £70 million development of the base which includes taxiways and operational buildings. The development, linked with the arrival of cruise missiles at nearby RAF Molesworth, was to have turned Alconbury into the biggest USAF base in Britain. But now Molesworth has been run down as a result of the INF arms reduction treatment 88 11 04

1989 04 18

An A-10 tankbuster jet taking part in close ground attack manoeuvres ploughed into a field near Ramsey Forty Foot and exploded in a ball of flame. It came down close to several farms, tearing across a road and narrowly missing two vans as it disintegrated. US troops scoured the wreckage for potentially dangerous training ammunition. It is the third accident locally in four months: one crashed into a field at Earith and another crashed off the end of the Alconbury runway 89 04 18

1989 07 07

Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography started when Prof John St Joseph began taking photographs in 1945 after his wartime experience showed him the value of aerial observation. In the first ten days he took 788 photographs. Until 1958 he used an RAF training aircraft but in 1962

the Department purchased its own plane. They have surveyed the whole of Cambridgeshire in colour.
89 07 07b

1989 12 12

Sir Arthur Marshall to retire – profile. His father set up a de luxe car hire service in Brunswick Terrace in 1909, opening garages in King Street and Jesus Lane. In 1912 carried petrol to Beta II airship which landed in grounds Jesus College. Bought first aircraft at Fowlmere in 1919. Got pilot's licence 1929 & bought a Gipsy Moth. Opened landing field behind house in Newmarket Road – 89 12 12b, c

1990 01 02

Campaigners walked through the Lakenheath USAF base as a protest against plans to close a public footpath. It runs for a mile between the main entrance on the A1065 and the B1112 near Lakenheath village. One gate has been locked since the American raid on Libya was launched by F-111 jets in 1986. Before that it was used as a short cut by base workers to get to their jobs. Legal moves to close it have been started by Forest Heath District Council following a request from the Ministry of Defence– 90 01 02

1990 01 12

The former cruise missile base at Molesworth is to become the base for the Joint Analysis Centre and the 497th Reconnaissance Technical Group. It will also be an emergency headquarters for the US Third Air Force in the event of war. Some 750 US military personnel will be based there full time. Some of the former cruise buildings will be modified for their new role but be subject to Soviet inspection under the terms of the INF treaty until 2001. The Third Air Force will keep its permanent peacetime headquarters at RAF Mildenhall. – 90 01 12

1990 09 06

Airglow light aircraft built at Sawston – 90 09 06b

1990 09 15

Spitfires lead planes over Cambridge en route Battle of Britain anniversary fly-past – 90 09 15

1995

Cambridge astronaut Dr Michael Foale became first Briton to carry out space walk on Discovery space shuttle, Feb; was student at Queens' College [Rev]

1997

Police buy helicopter [Rev]